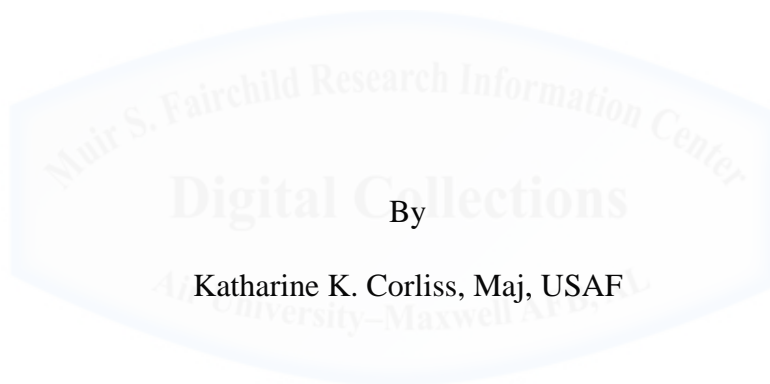


AIR COMMAND AND STAFF COLLEGE

AIR UNIVERSITY

TO BE OR NOT TO BE PART-TIME?: THE TRADITIONAL
COMMANDER IN THE 21ST CENTURY AIR NATIONAL GUARD



By

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PREFACE

I began my military career as an officer in the Army and served three years on active duty, followed by two and a half more years in the North Carolina National Guard. Through a series of life events, I transitioned to the California Air National Guard in 2009. Had I remained in the Army, the natural step in my career progression would have been to serve as a Company Commander, therefore, when the opportunity to command the Force Support Squadron (FSS) opened at my Wing shortly after I joined, I applied and was selected. I served as the FSS commander for 18 months in a part-time, “traditional” status during the latter years of my time as a Captain/O-3. That season of my career was an invaluable time to learn from missteps and improve my own leadership skills while serving during some challenging circumstances. As a new Air Force officer, I was able to observe differences in leadership styles and professional officer development between the Army and the Air Force, and attempt to affect change with the skills I learned as a Lieutenant from amazing Army mentors. I was also able to observe some distinctly different senior leader expectations of part-time members, company grade officers, and squadron commanders during this period of time. I am grateful for all the people who influenced my leadership journey. It was tough and I learned a lot about the struggles officers face who lead “part-time.”

I am still humbled by the opportunity to serve and lead amazing soldiers and/or Airmen during each leadership role. That season of command also highlighted for me that the quality of people who choose to serve in the military are some of the finest in the US and awakened a passion in me to influence and generate ideas for how to develop quality part-time leaders to provide our service members with the leaders they deserve. This research hopes to provide ideas for improvement to meet that end.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to examine the impact of the Air National Guard's (ANG) increased participation in the Total Force construct since September 11, 2001, on the position of the traditional, part-time commander. To achieve this objective, this research included a case study on the state of California, as one of the largest states in the US, and interviews of current and former traditional commanders, as well as their full-time representatives who oversee the daily operations of the unit while the commander is physically absent. The case study found traditional commanders do fill billets at every command level across California, however, in decreased numbers at higher levels of command and in diminishing numbers within units directly tied to operational missions.

The results of this research include a consolidated list of recommendations from the field for overcoming the identified challenges to serving as, and working for, a part-time commander in the ANG. These recommendations include specific, practical suggestions for ways to adequately resource, train, and empower part-time commanders for success. This study also confirmed the need for a renewed emphasis on developing general "officership" across the ANG, therefore, many of the recommendations included are applicable for developing and preparing all ANG officers for increased levels of responsibility over the course of their careers.

INTRODUCTION

Somehow the month flew by and it was already Friday in preparation for another busy Air National Guard drill weekend. Lt Col Smith arrived at the base bright and early, after driving from his hometown four hours away the night before. He knew he had several issues to organize before his 0700 meeting with his squadron leadership so he could delegate and follow up on several tasks. The hotel WIFI was not cooperating with the military virtual private network (VPN) system last night, so he did not finish getting through all the pertinent emails on his government laptop before hitting the rack. His full-time operations officer (OPSO), Capt Miller, interrupted his quiet time to inform him there were several line of duty (LOD) reports waiting in his inbox that required his signature first thing this morning, because the JAG would only be available to review them this weekend. Lt Col Smith thanked him and then asked for an update on the training plan being put together for the following drill weekend's base-wide exercise. Capt Miller assured him that all the details are being handled, but did not elaborate. Lt Col Smith would have to nail down some time later in the weekend to get further details on the actual status for each part of the training plan. Following the morning leadership meeting, Lt Col Smith spent the rest of the morning getting himself up to speed on the details of his squadron, such as the status of training, evaluations, overdue suspenses, delinquent accounts, etc., in preparation for the Wing Staff Meeting. No matter how much he prepared, he knew there will be at least one question posed by the Wing Commander that he would have to follow up on and find an answer. Sure enough, this month Col Jones questioned him on why he had two members 90 days overdue on paying their GTC cards, a report Lt Col Smith never received over email. Why were there so few military cell phones available across the Wing and why did his group commander not advocate for him to have one? It would be much easier to keep current on the daily pulse of his squadron with regular access to email ... although he still would not have been able to sign the LODs until his arrival at the base. He and Capt Miller tried to establish a weekly teleconference, so his ops officer could fill him in with regular updates, but so far Lt Col Smith noticed that if he did not ask the right question, Capt Miller did not always give him all the information. Upon investigation after the Wing Staff Meeting, Lt Col Smith discovered the GTC report only went out on the Full-time Wing Distribution List. He would have to remind Finance to make sure they sent it to all the Squadron Commanders and remind Capt Miller to forward those types of emails to him. Additionally, he would have to ensure he counselled his OPSO this drill weekend while they were both in a military status and remind him they needed to work in unity for the good of the entire unit. They both needed to come up with a better solution for communication during the month. They had four more drill weekends to prepare for the next Wing inspection, which realistically worked out to only eight more days for the entire unit to prepare together. Lt Col Smith did not feel reassured that the squadron would be ready in time, if he and his full-time representative did not resolve their communication struggles. To further complicate his life, there was also the big merger happening over the next six months at his civilian job, which was sure to consume most of his weekly schedule away from the base. This was going to be a tough few months trying to stay on top of everything!

Figure 1. Illustrative vignette of the challenges of part-time leadership

Since the establishment of the Total Force concept in the 1970's, the nation has relied more and more on the Air National Guard (ANG) to not only augment the Active Duty (AD) during times of war, but to also participate in full-time missions in defense of the homeland. No longer is the Air Guard's mission one of being called upon in times of dire need, but as equal players in protecting America's national security interests day-to-day.¹ Secretary of the Air

Force, James G. Roche, highlighted in a speech to the ANG Leadership in 2003, his acknowledgment of the ANG's critical role in providing combat power since the attacks on September 11, 2001, and the dual role air guardsmen play as military members and civil servants in their communities.² Today, "the Air National Guard provides almost 60 percent of all the aircraft for Operation Noble Eagle, the mission to maintain air sovereignty over the United States, and provided more than 30 percent of the fighter aircraft for Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan."³ Additionally, as the US military has been asked to become proficient across the full range of military operations in recent decades to include humanitarian and disaster relief missions, the skill sets and long-term expertise inherent to members of the ANG add to the necessity of the DoD to tap into the National Guard (NG) for its operational missions.⁴

Yet, the fundamental premise of the ANG is a state-funded and operated militia consisting of traditional, or part-time, members who participate in training and exercises one weekend a month and 15 additional days a year, to include many of the officers who lead them. In support of its traditional members, the ANG is also manned with a relatively small full-time force of military Technician and Active Guard Reserve (AGR) members who conduct the daily operations required to maintain the combat readiness of the Wings. As the Air Force was forced to innovate how it conducted war and peacetime operations with initiatives to further incorporate and tap into the resources of the ANG, it also had to tackle many legislative and practical hurdles in order to mobilize air guardsmen for participation in those operations. Creative solutions such as Active Associate programs where AD and Reserve Component (RC) units consolidate onto one operating location saved money and resources, yet presented leadership challenges because of officers in different statuses of legal authority.⁵ Legislative caps on the number of days

restricting the mobilization of traditional guardsmen (and only under provisions of war), combined with a systemic culture of deployments on a voluntary basis, also worked toward cost savings, but resulted in the majority of mobilized Airmen coming from the full-time force.⁶ Likewise, for ANG units tasked with a full-time mission in support of Operation Noble Eagle, while provided with additional full-time manning resources, the majority of leadership opportunities, particularly command opportunities, migrated to those filling the full-time resources out of necessity to maintain the current operations tempo (OPSTEMPO). In today's military operational environment, a portion of the nation's defense is being leveraged on a relatively small few and the ANG is no longer being led by its own traditional, part-time leadership.

The ANG of the 21st Century is now an operational ready reserve, sharing many mission sets with the AD Air Force, in addition to each state's homeland defense mission sets. Operational reserve is "a term used to describe the current situation in which the Air Force and the Army holds National Guard forces to the same standards of readiness as the active component and regularly rotates these forces onto active duty service, whether in times of war or in peacetime."⁷ As more time is required to meet those requirements, the ability for part-time commanders to effectively lead and ensure the readiness of their units decreases. Yet, this crucial position is a key element to ensuring the success and future of the ANG and may prove instrumental in revitalizing squadrons within this segment of the Total Force. As such, the question that this research seeks to answer is: How can the Air National Guard develop and equip part-time, traditional commanders while still meeting full-time mission requirements?

In 2016, Chief of Staff of the Air Force, General David Goldfein, set forth a challenge to examine the resource and leadership shortfalls affecting the service's culture and ways to

revitalize the Squadron as the heart of that culture.⁸ He acknowledged that the senior leadership of any organization determines the vision and drives accomplishment of the mission by its people. Therefore, any examination of the Air Force squadron must also include the position of the squadron commander, and that examination must extend to the opportunities and hurdles for the traditional squadron commander in the ANG. If the ANG is going to revitalize the squadron from within, it must analyze the officer commissioning and leadership development process, the number of traditional command opportunities, and how to properly groom its part-time officers in preparation to take those opportunities in the later stages of their careers.⁹ Additionally, the Air Force must consider the civilian and military, as well as the time and financial, sacrifices traditional commanders willingly make in order to serve as a part-time employee, and actively provide resources to overcome those hurdles.¹⁰ Lastly, properly fostering a climate of cooperation and unity of effort, along with the technology to support communication, between full-time and part-time leaders will be critical for success of the ANG in sustaining its ability to serve as an operational readiness force and generate healthy functioning squadrons. The goal for this research will be twofold: to identify the major challenges traditional commanders face for effective influence over their organizations and to provide a consolidated list of recommendations to overcome those challenges.

BACKGROUND

Definition Of Air National Guard Statuses

A key to understanding the conundrum of providing full-time oversight to daily operations within the ANG is to understand the different statuses in which its members serve.

This paper will limit the discussion to Title 32 of the US Code, as the majority of commander positions exist within the operational units in each state and are, therefore, Title 32 positions.

The Drill Status Guardsman (DSG), also known as a “traditional” or “part-time member,” is the service member typically thought of when referring to the NG. These members assemble to drill and train during Unit Training Assemblies (UTA) one weekend a month, along with additional annual training (AT) events for approximately 15 days out of the year. The opportunity to serve their country as members of the military on a part-time basis holds great appeal for those who may not desire to, or cannot serve, in the AD. For decades, Congress set a limit of no more than 30 AT days a year for RC members. In response to the increased OPSTEMPO, NGB released a policy memorandum January 19, 2017, stipulating approval of an ANG-wide exception to policy to Department of Defense Instruction (DoDI) 1215.06 to waive the 30 AT day cap.¹¹ Specific to the ANG, there are also additional active and inactive duty pay status options which equate to one active duty day’s salary: Active Duty Operational Support (ADOS), Special Training (ST), Additional Training Period (ATP), Additional Flying and Flight Training Period (AFTP), etc. The multitude of options are complex, but ensure the availability of members to meet mission requirements.

To support the training requirements of DSGs and to ensure the daily/monthly operations for the units continue, the ANG also has full-time employees in several types of statuses. Active Guard Reserve (AGR) members are effectively the same as AD Title 10, however, they serve under Title 32 instead, working directly for the state. They receive the same pay and benefits as AD members and are expected to be available for duty 24 hours a day/7 days a week. Commanders within the ANG have the flexibility to adjust personnel resources as necessary, to include most AGR resources. The majority of AGRs are given orders to serve for several years

at a time, giving commanders the ability to reassess each member's performance and continue to renew their AGR orders or adjust to assign a different member as full-time. Additionally, commanders may hire members temporarily as AGRs for as little as a few months, which can assist in filling manning gaps or serve as a recruiting tool to bring in new or experienced talent for a short period of time.

Another type of full-time member of the Air National Guard are the military Technicians, also known as Title 32 dual-status technicians. They are Federal civil service employees working for the US government during the week, but in order to retain their full-time employment status, they must also maintain a military position as a DSG. During the workweek, they are technically civilian employees, however, they are afforded the right to wear the military uniform. For all appearances, they look like AD members, however they receive civilian pay for the workweek and military pay for their DSG participation. Likewise, there are differing benefits for each status and as they continue to serve, they have the opportunity to work toward a civil service retirement and a military retirement at the same time. In a similar vein to AGRs, commanders also have the flexibility and resourcing to offer their members temporary full-time employment as technicians to fill operational requirements. Unfortunately, the majority of these temporary options do not afford the members the same types of healthcare and retirement benefits that permanent positions provide. Essentially they offer only an hourly wage, which on occasion can prove to be its own recruiting tool. For members with circumstances preventing a true full-time commitment, they can still work the hours they are available and receive compensation for those hours worked.

At the unit level, the Wing's full-time and part-time resources are assigned to each position number with some flexibility to adjust those resources as needed. For assignment of

leadership positions, most units will either have a full-time commander and a part-time deputy or operations officer, or vice versa. More commonly practiced in the NG on the Army-side than the Air, for military Technicians, the commander may hold the military position as a DSG and hold a different technician job throughout the state or Wing. This flexibility provides opportunities to force develop for leadership growth, as well as prevents burn-out of individuals doing the same job at the same base for the majority of their careers.

Previous Research On The Force Development Of Commanders In The ANG

Little research exists examining the specific role of the traditional ANG commander, particularly since the events of September 11, 2001, and the corresponding increased inclusion of the NG in the War on Terrorism. In his 1999 Air War College dissertation, Lt Col Henry Straub wrote with incredible foresight, concluding that more would be required from traditional commanders in order to meet the operational requirements leveraged on the ANG.¹² His work provides a historical reference regarding the development of the Total Force concept from the institution of state militias during the Revolutionary War to the end of the 20th Century. He predicted the increased reliance on ANG capabilities to support an increased global threat as the AD Air Force faced significant drawdown at the end of the Cold War. His analysis, however, lacked any discussion regarding whether or not traditional, part-time commanders could still be effective in leading their Airmen within this new Total Force construct.

By 2015, the National Guard Association grew concerned with the impact of the increased OPSTEMPO post-September 11, 2001, on leadership development across the NG and commissioned Hugh T. Broomall to conduct an extensive research project in conjunction with his doctoral dissertation. Broomall's research focused on the "executive-level" senior leadership across the entire NG through surveys to identify the preparedness of NG officers to effectively

lead in the midst of the increase in conflict participation. His research uncovered a systemic deficiency across the ANG: “without the benefit of classroom [professional military education (PME)] and without the engagement of supervisors, the majority of the United States Air Force officers and almost all of the ANG officers receive very little leadership development training throughout their careers.”¹³ Additionally, he concluded from the experience of these executive leaders across the NG enterprise that “the career blueprint for a NG officer is modeled after the active duty officer’s career model. It was noted in the interviews that a ‘one size fits all’ career planning guide does not work for the traditional Guard officer or the full time support officers.”¹⁴ In short, his study revealed solid evidence for the need to design and tailor leadership development specific to the OPSTEMPO and subtle career differences of the officers in the NG.

Working Theory

The working theory for this research surmises that the increase in workload across the ANG from 1999 to the present led to decreased opportunities for traditional commanders to serve in command billets. A 2016 article in *Kuka'ilimoku* highlighted the rarity of traditional commanders at the squadron level as Maj Grady Green assumed command as the second traditional commander of the 154th Logistics Readiness Squadron in 20 years.¹⁵ By both leveraging AD mission sets on the ANG and greater Reserve Component (RC) participation in the overseas deployment cycles, Air Force leadership increased its demand in man-hours for quality job performance at all levels, particularly for key leadership positions. Goodall’s survey results indicated that participants believed “deployments gave them the best amount of experience” to grow in their MOS/AFSC skills along with job rotations and experiences outside the tactical unit level, yet a DSG member specifically highlighted the incompatibility with those assignments and civilian employment and/or family life.¹⁶ Additionally, the fiscal constraints

traditionally leveraged on the ANG has led to a greater strain on its limited available resources. The 30 AT day cap coupled with training days not being loaded for Wing execution until the last quarter of the fiscal year, often prevents DSG members from being able to utilize those limited resources once they become available. Additionally, technological constraints hamper the ability for DSG members to work from home without the appropriate military equipment due to information security protections. The combination of these constraints has substantively affected the ability for traditional commanders to be successful within the ANG.

Adaptive Leadership Method

Leaders at all levels across the ANG enterprise are begging for more frequent and consistent feedback on their performance, along with mentoring for the development of effective leadership over the course of their careers. “In a thorough review of current leadership development practices, Day identified six development practices as the most popular and promising: (1) 360-degree feedback, (2) coaching, (3) mentoring, (4) networks, (5) job assignments, and (6) action learning.”¹⁷ With the current deficit of leadership development in which the ANG finds itself, the application of methods, such as Adaptive Leadership, hold potential for improving the overall culture across the ANG. A similar concept to Boyd’s OODA Loop, the Adaptive Leadership Method incorporates a continuous cycle of observation, interpretation, and intervention on the part of leaders for making changes to the organization’s culture.¹⁸ This leadership model “is specifically about [cultural] change that enables [the organization with] the capacity to thrive,” therefore it lends itself well for traditional commanders to implement in how to affect change within their organizations as the ANG continues to grow in strong leadership development programs.¹⁹ As such, this research effort seeks to uncover practical ideas for traditional commanders to implement for improving their

ability to observe, interpret, and intervene in the culture of their organizations, whether physically present with their Airmen or not.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES

The research methodology used to examine the research question was a combination of Case Study and Survey Research methodologies. This combination of both qualitative and descriptive research methodologies was suitable for gaining insight into the reasons why there are so few traditional Commanders throughout the ANG and how to better enable and empower part-time officers to be successful in command positions.²⁰ The primary method of data collection came in the form of personal interviews with current and former part-time commanders throughout the Californian Air National Guard (CA ANG). Several current and former full-time OPSOs were also interviewed to ascertain the perspective of the primary daily representative during the commander's absence. These interviews were conducted in-person when able and over the phone when necessary. Some follow-up questions and clarifications were also answered over email as necessary. A total of 25 requests for interviews were sent out to each CA ANG Wing. Due to time constraints on the part of both the interviewer and interviewee and lack of response to some requests, eight interviews of part-time commanders and five of full-time representatives were completed. In general, participants were open about their personal experiences and eager to share their ideas for how to make improvements to better the ANG. Participant sentiments were consistent across the sample, indicating the preponderance of the identifiable limiting factors (LIMFACs). The potential for errors in credibility, however, does exist because some interviewees may not have been entirely forthcoming regarding negative issues or personality conflicts with subordinates and superiors. A few issues were mentioned or skirted around, but most interviewees were not willing to delve into detail over

personality conflicts with superiors. Likewise, the assurance of anonymity on the part of the interviewer did not persuade any further open discussion on negative issues surrounding personality conflicts. Any information uncovered would have left open the possibility of questioning the reliability of the information itself, therefore this research does not include any “anonymously” provided information.

ANALYSIS OF THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES

The State of California was chosen for the case study because of the large number and diversity of ANG Wings in comparison to other states in the Union. California has over 4,500 Citizen Airmen serving in its five Wings: the 129th Rescue Wing (MC-130P & HH-60G Pave Hawk), 144th Fighter Wing (F-15C), 146th Airlift Wing (C-130J), 163rd Attack Wing (MQ-1 Predator), and 195th Wing (Cyber Operations, Combat Communications, Intelligence, Space Control, ISR).²¹ These Wings support a variety of federal missions, such as Aerospace Control Alert (ACA), Combat Search and Rescue, intra-theater airlift and air-refueling capabilities, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) and strike capabilities, MILSTAR satellite constellation, and the Joint Space Operations Center, and state missions, such as Defense Support of Civil Authorities (DSCA), National Guard Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and High Yield Explosive (CBRNE) Enhanced Response Force Package (CERFP), and Modular Airborne Fire Fighting System (MAFFS). At any given time, members from across the CA ANG are fully engaged in support of Combatant Commanders around the globe, while simultaneously supporting the Governor with state and local disaster relief.

California Air National Guard Case Study Demographics

In an examination of command billets throughout these Wings, traditional commanders served at each level across the various CA ANG organizations. The Wing Executive Officer (XO) and/or delegated Airman from the Personnel Flight at each Wing provided all requested manning and strength numbers over information request calls and emails. Due to the Official Use Only (FOUO) nature of the specific numbers, the analysis only examined percentages.

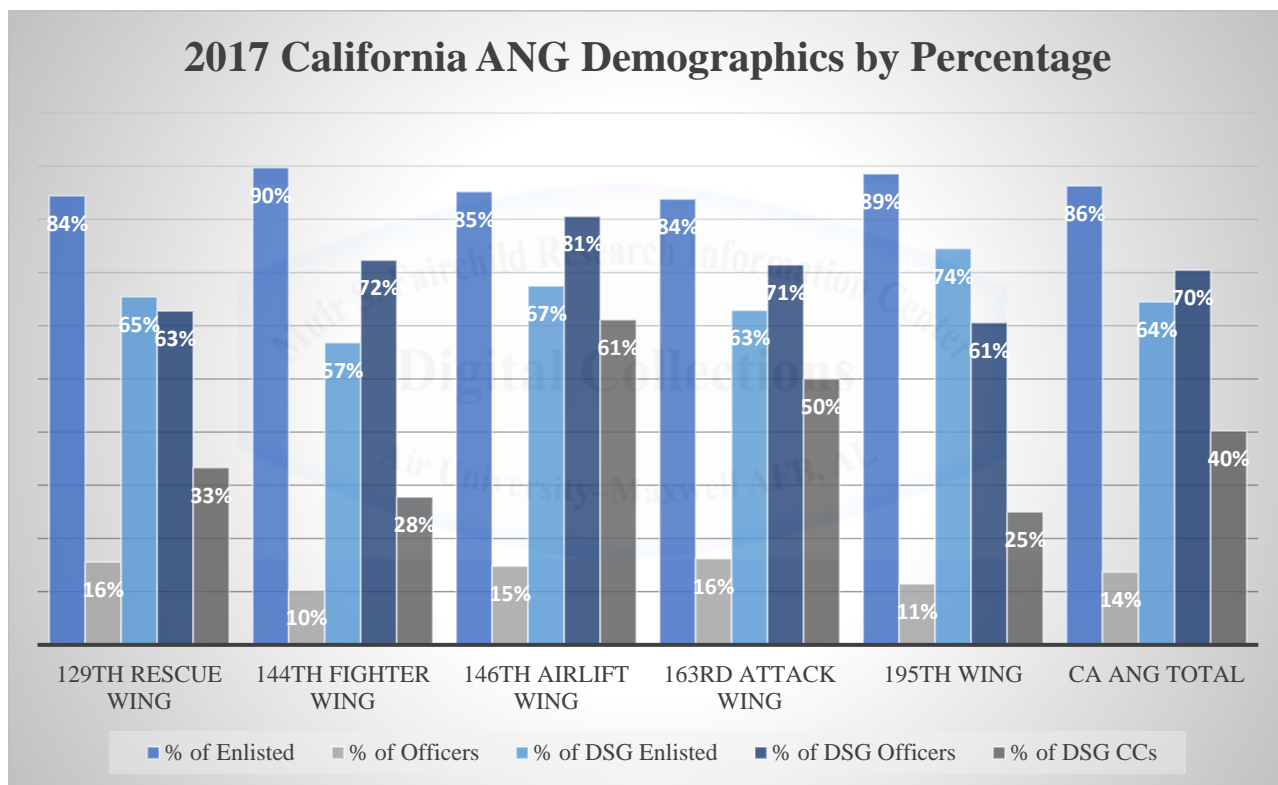


Figure 2. 2017 CA ANG total strength demographics ^{22, 23, 24, 25, 26}

Notes: % of Officers and Enlisted was derived from the total strength of the units, % of DSG officers and enlisted was derived from the total numbers of each category, and % of DSG commanders was derived from the total number of g-series order commander positions within each Wing (e.g., for the 129th Rescue Wing, officers made up 16% of their total strength and of those officers, 63% were DSGs. Of the total number of commander billets, 33% were filled by DSGs).

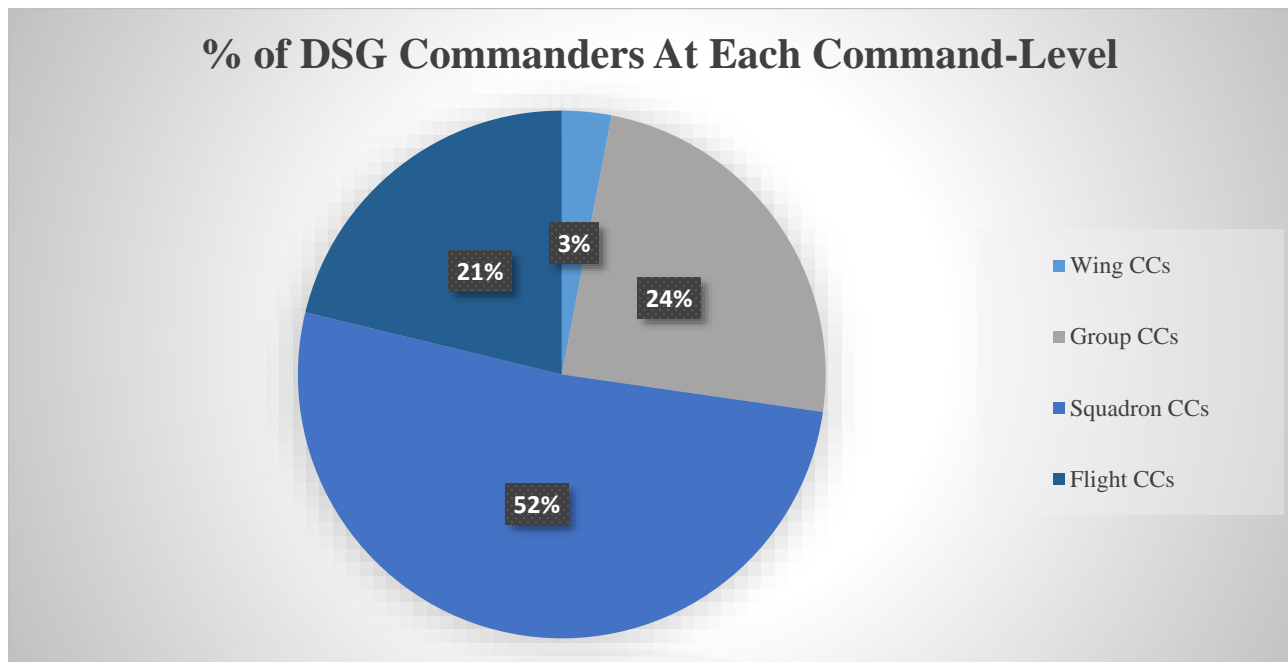


Figure 3. 2017 CA ANG traditional commanders by command level

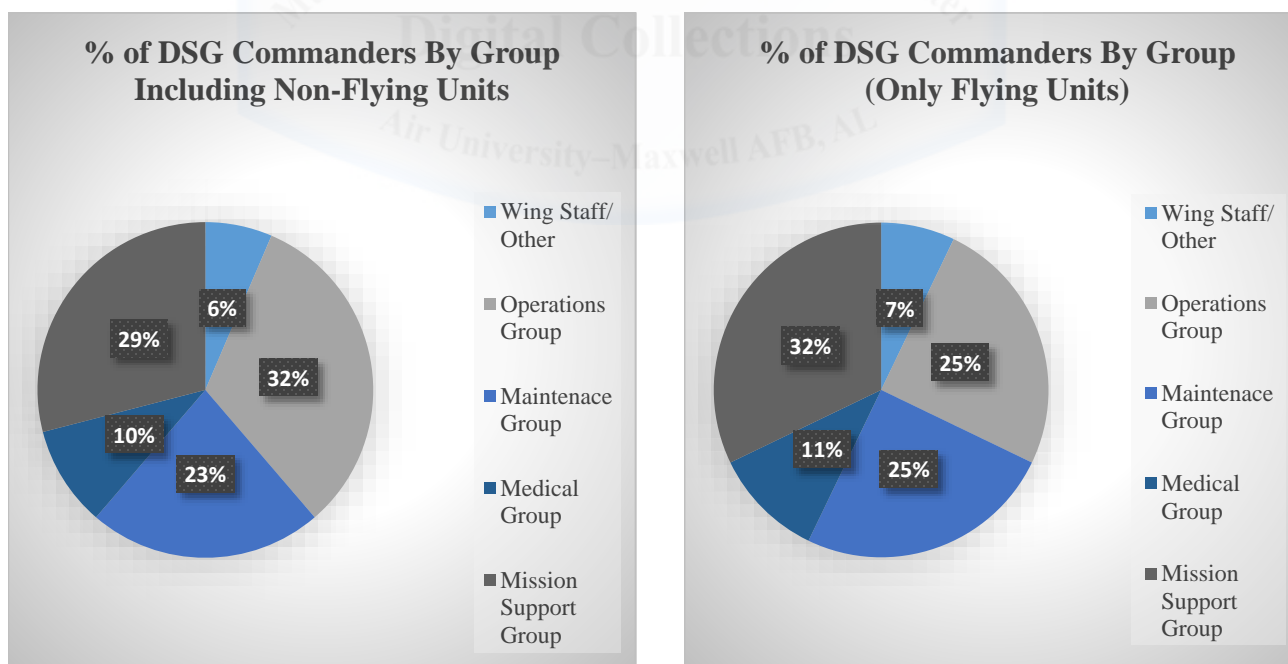


Figure 4. 2017 CA ANG traditional commanders by group

The data supplied by the Wings provide some intriguing common trends. First, the number of traditional commanders decreased commensurate with the increase in authority level within the Wing structure. At the Group Commander-level, the majority of traditional commanders at each Wing were the Medical Group Commander. Only one Wing currently had a traditional Wing commander. Second, with the exception of the 146th Airlift Wing, for flying units, the majority of traditional commanders were assigned within the Mission Support Group (MSG). During the information request calls, all the Wing XO's noted the decreased numbers of traditional commanders with the Maintenance and Operations groups over the course of the past decade. The data provided support the conclusion that the increased OPSTEMPO to meet full-time mission requirements post-September 11, 2001, may be incompatible for commanders of these units to serve in a part-time status without substantive support across the enterprise. Finally, of the total number of command billets at the individual Wings across the CA ANG, DSG officers filled 40 percent. While not reflective of the total DSG population (70% DSG officers and 64% DSG enlisted), this percentage of DSG commanders was higher than anticipated, given the working theory. As such, the results of the commander/full-time interviews shed light on the commitment by these traditional commanders to work toward effectively leading their organizations.

Identification Of Key Constraints And LIMFACs For Part-time Commanders

"The art of communication is the language of leadership."

~ James Humes

Communication! The single greatest common issue identified by all interviewees was the challenge of maintaining effective communication up and down the chain of command. Communication is a struggle in *any* organization and leading people while being physically present on a part-time basis adds a layer of complexity to an already difficult matter. Each

traditional commander emphasized the importance of establishing a clear vision for the unit and taking an active role in setting priorities for their Airmen during their physical absence.

Monitoring communication activities, such as email, to ensure the right people were talking to each other during the month was a common primary role for these commanders when not present at the base.²⁷ Additionally, many commented that the greatest hurdle in the communication loop was when important data/decisions were not disseminated to all pertinent personnel. The commander or full-time representative do not possess mental telepathy abilities, therefore a common constraint is making the best decision with the known information, with the clear understanding that some decisions may require adjustment as time progressed.

For commanders who felt communication was their single greatest challenge, one of the most commonly mentioned constraints was a lack of technological tools provided by superiors or the difficulties inherent to those tools. Some of the technological resources available for accessing military work-related material from home were a military cellphone with email capability, a military laptop with Virtual Private Network (VPN) access enabling email capability and share-drive folder connectivity, and lastly, a Common Access Card (CAC) reader for use on personal computers. While each of these resources provide connectivity to the military network, they also, currently, have their own LIMFACs. Encrypted emails containing FOUO information or Personally Identifiable Information (PII) are unreadable on the cellphone. Unfortunately, these are the most common emails requiring commander-level attention. Another frequently mentioned situation was, in an effort to abide by all Air Force regulations securing these types of information, many Airmen choose to encrypt *all* their emails without understanding the limitations that choice imposes on commanders attempting to communicate regularly through cellphones.²⁸ VPN access is extremely slow, requiring even more time waiting

for emails to load or shared drives to update.²⁹ CAC readers assist in accessing some military websites from personal computers, however, more and more military websites require access from “*.mil” networks, thereby limiting CAC reader usage from home and steadily eroding this option for working from home. These technological advantages can significantly improve the part-time commander’s ability to frequently communicate with their Airmen, however, senior leaders need to ensure these resources are consistently available and provided to the commander.

The other commonly mentioned communication constraint was a difficult working relationship between the commander and their full-time counterpart. Fortunately, this was a rare occurrence with most interviewees, however, all experienced or witnessed occasions when the power struggle between the two or inability to overcome the intrinsic communication hurdles led to an unhealthy, toxic work environment for the entire unit. One of the constraints in adequately addressing this issue can be the differing statuses between the commander and full-timer. When the commander is on active orders or attending UTAs, he/she is in a military status and able to leverage command authority through the state’s Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ), if applicable. The majority of supervisory positions in the ANG’s full-time organizational structure are usually military Technicians, therefore, during the workweek these members are not subject to UCMJ and technically do not report directly to the military commander, but to the next supervisor in the Technician chain-of-command. This discord of supervisory reporting structures can lead to frustrations in resolving personality conflicts or differences in opinion for executing daily operations and leading the unit’s members. This can lead to a situation where traditional commanders must wait until both parties are in a military status at the same time, i.e., UTA weekends, to conduct any disciplinary actions to correct behavior. Most ANG members are mature and professional about the unique legalities between statuses of the military members and

technicians and choose to operate within the authority structure established through military channels at all times, but there are rare occasions when the traditional commander can find his/her hands tied due to these differing statuses.

The next universally mentioned LIMFAC is that “time” is a limited resource. The general consensus was being engaged on a daily or weekly basis is a critical requirement to remain up to date on the happenings of the unit. Many understood the ANG cultural expectation that putting in time from home is part and parcel for being a traditional commander and those interviewed for this research indicated they put in an average of 8-10 hours per week at home (some financially compensated, some not). While all interviewees communicated an understanding of this expectation, several did have the support and tools from their senior leadership for financial compensation in some form. The interviewees all articulated different options and not all had an understanding of each option already available through various ANG resources. A consolidated list will be discussed further in the recommendations section of this research.

In a similar vein, having enough time to adequately maintain a balance between civilian work, military work, and family life was a common theme among all interviewees. Work-life balance is a universal struggle in American culture today, yet the military demands often add additional pressure and time constraints for traditional commanders. Finding time to fully engage as a commander, while maintaining a successful civilian career, can be insurmountable for some ANG members.³⁰ One intriguing trend uncovered while conducting interviews was that almost all interviewees had a civilian career with unique work hours conducive to putting in the 8-10 hours during the regular workday and/or civilian leadership very supportive of military service. For example, several were commercial pilots with the ability to telecommute from home

while “sitting reserve” for the airlines or from their hotel rooms while on a commercial airline trip.³¹ Two commanders worked for government contracting firms with the ability to access military email from their work computers and civilian leadership in the office who were prior military members themselves.³² Two other commanders served as local police officers with military-friendly leave policies, although, being on active orders was necessary for implementation of those policies.³³

Identification Of Key Constraints And LIMFACs For Full-time Personnel Subordinate To Part-time Commanders

The full-time OPSO or supervisory representative who ensures the daily operations of the unit proceed while the part-time commander is physically absent from the base is a crucial linchpin for the success of the organization. As previously mentioned, the working relationship between the two is unique and adequately researching the position of the traditional commander would not be complete without interviewing Airmen filling the position as their daily operations representative. These officers and enlisted superintendents ensure the seamless functioning of the unit from UTA weekend to UTA weekend, coordinate training requirements for efficient usage of Airmen’s time, and manage personnel issues, all without the command authority vested in the commander position. They, too, face some specific LIMFACs in handling these requirements.

Effective communication was also the number one LIMFAC identified by these interviewees. All felt empowered by their commanders to make important decisions, but the ability to get rapid, decisive answers for commander-only decisions was commonly referenced by all these full-timers.³⁴ They did have the capability to reach their commanders through some form of communication, yet not always at a speed facilitated by physical presence. The most

frequent method for immediate contact and resolution of problems mentioned was cellphone texting, however, some personnel issues require communication through military means only, thereby lengthening the time to receive a final decision. Another communication constraint was maintaining consistent communication to allow for the follow-up of decisions made by the commander over UTA weekend which the full-timer might not have known about at the time of implementation. Most command teams had a daily/weekly battle-rhythm in place to minimize the communication gaps, which the recommendations section of this research will discuss further.

Likewise, the ability to get necessary signatures in a timely manner because of the privacy requirements was another commonly mentioned LIMFAC. Sign-in-lieu of appointment letters are an effective tool for delegating authority in the absence of the commander, but there are some personnel actions that require only the commander's signature.³⁵ In those instances, moving up to a higher level of command authority can solve the immediate issue, yet this removes the traditional commander from the process, potentially leading to a lack of influence or circumventing them from the process.

Lastly, the additional time required to prepare the traditional commander with adequate information prior to UTA weekends was another commonly expressed LIMFAC for the full-timers.³⁶ When the communication throughout the month is consistent, this reduces the workload leading into each UTA weekend, albeit, there were still many processes the full-time interviewees communicated which required a sufficient amount of their time to ensure their commanders were set up for success.³⁷ Again, the culture of the ANG establishes a precedence for the necessity of this requirement leveraged onto the full-time representative and several

recommendations for implementing some effective mitigation strategies will be discussed further.

Identification Of Key Constraints And LIMFACs For Developing Competitive Part-time Commanders

These interviews also identified several LIMFACs for developing DSG officers throughout their careers to enable them to be competitive with their full-time peers for command positions at the appropriate time. First and foremost, junior officers benefit from leadership opportunities consisting of relatively lengthy periods of full-time managerial responsibilities. Almost every traditional commander interviewed had either served on AD for many years prior to transitioning to the ANG or served on a full-time basis for six months to a few years at various points throughout their military careers. They all expressed how valuable those periods of full-time service were for facilitating their competitiveness among all the applicants for their respective commander positions. Those periods of full-time service also gave them opportunities to rapidly learn ANG personnel management and resourcing policies, general leadership skills, and establish good working relationships for networking later. Also of concern was a lack of defined expectations of performance for strictly DSG officers by senior leaders. The expectations cannot ever be truly equivalent to full-time officers and the ANG has not adjusted promotions/awards/performance rating systems to account for DSGs as their own status.³⁸

Another significant LIMFAC for career progression for all officers throughout the ANG is the necessity to cross-train to a different Air Force Specialty Code (AFSC) multiple times over their military careers. This challenge stems from the nature of being a citizen-soldier, serving at the local base for the duration of military service, and presents particularly unique hurdles for DSG officers. Manning structures at ANG units are relatively fixed, therefore grooming leaders

across any given base often requires leaders to cross-train to pursue career progression at that base. While opportunities exist within a state or across state lines for officers to serve in their primary AFSC, pursuing these opportunities comes at the additional cost of time and travel, hampering participation for members whose civilian work or family requirements are not conducive to the extra travel. Moving into another career field on the base is an excellent option for pursuing advancement while remaining local, but comes with the requirement to attend technical schooling within two years of assignment to the new position. Depending on the career field, attending a fully-qualifying initial technical school can demand several months, potentially affecting the DSG's civilian career. Waiver processes exist to exempt this requirement, but a majority are denied in the absence of substantive justification. This extra schooling requirement alone was expressed during the interviews as a substantial hindrance by several officers for their unwillingness to pursue other leadership opportunities across their base.³⁹ For most Air Force pilots, the Air Force-wide shortages across each airframe and the tremendous investment in their training makes cross-training to another AFSC unrealistic and a waste of taxpayers' dollars. One interviewee attended an AFSC-qualifying technical school eight times over the course of his enlisted and officer career, arguably also a waste of money.⁴⁰ As a result, many ANG officers find themselves funneled into a narrow pyramid for upward progression and decreases the Wing's ability to develop multi-faceted leaders for the future.⁴¹

TRADITIONAL COMMANDER SUITABILITY ANALYSIS

For any given ANG unit, a traditional commander may not be the ideal selection to ensure effective leadership exists at the top for mission accomplishment. This research discovered, across the CA ANG in 2017, DSGs filled 33 percent of the available command billets. Of those traditional commanders, 73 percent served at the squadron or flight level, the

closest touch-point to the individual Airman according to Gen Goldfein. The survey interviews indicated that traditional commanders bring many positive influences to their units, but there were some distinctively negative impacts which ANG leadership must mitigate for traditional commanders to lead successfully.

Positive Impacts Of Traditional Commanders Within Their Organizations

Developing and empowering traditional commanders is not without its challenges, but is well worth the effort to gain the unique leadership viewpoints they bring to the overall organization. There are many positive impacts DSG commanders provide from the experiences they gain in their civilian careers. Business practices and managerial skills in the civilian sector can vary greatly from structured military organizations. A leadership mindset geared toward streamlining processes and maintaining efficiency is an enormous benefit in the ANG, as units learn to do more with fewer resources. Business practices learned in the corporate world bring needed innovation to the bureaucracy inherent in governmental practices. One interviewee mentioned his military experience also proved beneficial in furthering his civilian career because his military skills made him more competitive for increased responsibility in civilian leadership roles, potentially leading to additional pay in his civilian career.⁴² Lastly, the traditional commander's civilian work may be in a different career field than their military AFSC, but they can still provide valuable experience to the entire base. For example, serving as a police officer is very common across the ANG, and while these members may not serve militarily in Security Forces, they can provide readily available security experience and liaison with law enforcement agencies throughout their communities.⁴³

Traditional commanders also bring a fresh perspective each month when they arrive for UTA weekends. They often come energized to work because their reserve duties are a break

from their regular jobs.⁴⁴ This motivation from the top brings vitality to the entire unit. Moreover, they are able to observe the unit in snapshots of time, enabling them to better evaluate the effectiveness of a process.⁴⁵ Why has there been little movement on a project from month to month? What is thwarting progress so the issue is solved during their absence, rather than waiting for them to personally engage in the situation in monthly intervals? Traditional commanders can also act as an outside set of eyes to examine a problem or course of action.⁴⁶ When an issue is not part of their daily/weekly operations, they have the ability to distance themselves from the problem and view it with more objectivity.

Ultimately, traditional commanders represent the majority population of the ANG. Ensuring DSGs fill top leadership roles throughout the organization demonstrates the ability for upward mobility and leadership opportunities to other part-time members at every level, both officer and enlisted. Traditional commanders can often relate better to social, civilian work, and family issues, etc., with their part-time members.⁴⁷ The trust developed through shared experiences, both on the base and off, pays dividends for building unit morale. Likewise, first-hand knowledge of the difficulties in balancing all areas of life, while maintaining military skill-level proficiency, provides these commanders with a distinct viewpoint for resolving DSG specific situations. They can also influence and share those challenges across the organization with full-time members who have never served in the ANG on a part-time basis.

Negative Impacts Of Traditional Commanders Within Their Organizations

While traditional commanders bring many benefits to their units, there can be some distinctly negative impacts to the organization. They may lack the full-time perspective, especially if they never served in a full-time capacity for any length of time. The smaller, full-time force bears the brunt of the workload throughout the month, to include executing the daily

mission, along with all the preparations for training and resourcing the part-time force for the few days out of the month when those members arrive to participate in training. While traditional commanders provide eyes for innovation, they can generate frustration within the unit if they struggle to understand why the bureaucratic, lengthy processes exist. For instance, when the Federal budget is not approved on schedule, resources are unavailable to pay for additional training days or to allocate funds for previously planned projects, pushing completion dates further down the timeline. If the traditional commander seeks the improvement of processes across their organization, they must take the time to understand the complexities and constraints inherent to governmental regulations. In addition, they must temper their delegation of tasks to their full-time staff with an understanding of how much additional time will be leveraged upon their staff members to meet those tasks. Time is also a limited resource for the full-timer, therefore the commander must be mindful to minimize the impact of their requests on the available time of their full-timers.

The interviews identified that the greatest negative impact to the unit is the rare occasion when the part-time commander and full-time representative have personality conflicts or authority disagreements. All organizations suffer disharmony when leaders clash, however, the effects are exacerbated in this particular authority structure. This tension can lead to significant communication errors and guidance issues, further alienating the two who must work in unison and can, thus, generate even more confusion, which naturally trickles down to the lowest Airman.⁴⁸ Additionally, if the traditional commander does not remain engaged throughout the month, but simply hands the workload and responsibility off to their full-time representative, they generate even more workload for the full-timer. Similarly, if the traditional commander and superior commander struggle with mutual trust and support, this dissention can also lead to the

blurring of command lines, potentially stripping the traditional commander of any true authority. In either scenario, the leadership team runs the risk of the traditional commander becoming a figure-head and commander-in-title-only, doing a disservice to all the Airmen under his/her command.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EQUIPPING AND TRAINING ANG TRADITIONAL COMMANDERS

"The day soldiers stop bringing you their problems is the day you have stopped leading them."
~ General Colin Powell

During the interview process, each interviewee gave excellent examples for how they overcome the identified LIMCACs, along with ideas to consider for future improvements. Many of these traditional commanders utilize some or all of the tools currently available, but did have some recommended improvements for better functionality. Surprisingly, there were some commanders who did not have access to some tools and/or were not aware of some options, therefore this section will serve to consolidate those ideas.

Recommendations For Overcoming Identified Constraints/LIMFACs

First and foremost, the interviewees shared many recommendations for improving the most often mentioned LIMFAC of effective communication. Technological resources were recommended across the board and, while mitigation of information security challenges is crucial, there were suggestions for improvements. Issuing every traditional commander with the military technology to enable working from off base (cell phone, laptop, CAC reader) should no longer be a recommendation or available in the event of enough resources, but a requirement. Innovation in the capabilities of these technologies should also be a center of focus for A-6 staff.

VPN is so slow, it poses as its own LIMFAC. All commanders interviewed were fully committed to working from home, however, they cannot continue to have their time wasted through slow data pipelines and/or hardware. Likewise, innovation for productivity on military cellphones should be another area of modernization. CAC-readers installed on cellphones proved bulky and inefficient, yet the inability to access and work with encrypted emails requires a sustainable solution. Efforts centered on making these hand-held devices fully functional would eliminate an enormous amount of redundancy in resources to meet mission requirements and effectively communicate.

In addition to supplying the appropriate resources to overcoming communication LIMFACs, the traditional commander and full-time staff must establish a workable battle rhythm for keeping the information flowing between all parties. The interviews highlighted many practical recommendations toward that end. Consistent contact throughout each week is a requirement, whether utilizing phone calls, text messages, or emails. Most interviewees commented that frequent texts were the communication method of greatest ease and least expense, although often conducted over personal cellphone by one or both members. Another suggestion was to courtesy copy (CC), within reason, all applicable parties on pertinent emails for awareness. Some teams utilize a continuity binder updated by the full-timer with the latest reports from agencies across the base as a quick reference for the commander when he/she arrives for UTA weekend.⁴⁹ A pre-UTA planning meeting, whether in person the Thursday or Friday leading into the weekend or a teleconference with corresponding PowerPoint slides accessible by the traditional commander, were also mentioned as practical strategies for the full-timer to provide consistent updates and a hand-off of information to the commander. Likewise, of equal importance was an end-of-UTA wrap-up by the commander to return the reins of the

daily operations back to the full-timer. Also suggested was for the commander and full-timer to maintain a running list/document from month-to-month on continuing issues needing resolution, along with previous decisions, for continuity and to ensure fairness across the organization. Finally, a dedicated Customer Service Support (CSS) would provide the commander with program oversight of all personnel issues and the ability to ensure the processes are completed in a timely manner during the regular work week.⁵⁰

The cultural expectation that traditional commanders will commit to serving their units on or off duty, paid or unpaid, is a commitment all interviewed commanders were willing to make, however the ANG must ensure the availability of resources to balance their selfless service with financial compensation for the work conducted at home and the responsibility they assume. A strong recommendation is to permanently remove the 30 AT day limit for RC members. To function as an operational force will require the ability to work more than a limited number of days per year. This is the cost of adjusting the way the ANG participates in the Total Force. The availability of additional training days will enable traditional commanders to telecommute from home and the recommendation from this research is the telecommuting option should be standard practice for all traditional commanders. Each organization can implement checks and balances for how these members log the time they work away from the base for accountability. One example is a simple spreadsheet with date, amount of time, tasks accomplished/area of focus which is then forwarded to the superior commander on a set schedule when filing for the AT days.⁵¹ After each eight hours of time logged, the commander can then request for those corresponding AT days. Other resources should be made available, such as ST or ATP days, and earlier in the Fiscal Year. Most of those resources typically become available during the last quarter of the FY, therefore decreasing the effective management of those

resources throughout the year. Likewise, most part-time members need to be able to balance their civilian and military obligations throughout the entire year and do not typically have only the month of September free.⁵² One final consideration, in lieu of logging and filing for work performed away from the base, is implementation of an incentive bonus specific to traditional commanders or a for-retirement-points-only earning system.

The Air Force strives to maintain a highly professional and well-trained force, which is all the more crucial for DSG members because the nature of the ANG leaves few opportunities for on-the-job training (OJT). Lengthy temporary duty (TDY) assignments and a lack of ANG seats for technical schools and PME are incompatible with maintaining flexibility for DSG members' career progression, therefore AETC should develop more "short courses" and distance learning options specific to the ANG. Likewise, ANG Functional Managers for each career field must facilitate and approve training waiver requests more often. Networking across the Air Force community in the school environment offers many benefits, but that must be balanced with the realities of serving in the military in a part-time status. Additionally, AETC should put effort into developing curriculum specific to ANG units. For example, this author attended the ten-week Force Support Officers Course, learning about AD personnel actions and manpower management, however none of that portion of the curriculum applied to the ANG. The expectation was ANG officers would learn the applicable processes at their units through OJT. DSG officers must also aggressively and personally advocate for waivers/exceptions, communicating along the process until the waiver is granted. In the words of one interviewee, "don't take no for an answer, but keep engaged until you find the right person who can approve the request."⁵³

The ANG currently offers several training programs for Commander-specific issues and all current and upcoming commanders should be encouraged to attend. The most often mentioned as valuable sources of training and information were: Contemporary Base Issues, Squadron Commanders Course (formerly known as Intermediate Development Course), and Commander's Development Course. These courses provide opportunities to connect with other commanders across the ANG, up-channel challenges at the local base level to senior ANG leadership, and prepare new commanders with ideas to mitigate issues common to ANG units. At the local ANG Wing, some units provide basic overview training to their new commanders on support agency functions, personnel actions, etc.; a sort of Commanders 101 training. Efforts by agencies across the base to educate all commanders on how their organizations function will pay huge dividends toward efficiency, cross-talk, and unity of effort for Wing processes. For overall officer development, the National Guard Association also hosts an annual Officer Professional Development conference and Fellows Program.⁵⁴ One interviewee commented that "leadership training is arguably more important than AFSC training."⁵⁵

At the individual level, multiple interviewees reiterated the importance of developing certain essential personal skills to ensure success for themselves and their units. Organizational skills were the most often mentioned. Because time is such a limited resource, traditional members must use every minute dedicated to military obligations with efficiency.⁵⁶ Furthermore, the development of excellent organizational skills also works toward the end of improved communication between the commander and the full-time staff. Each commander must establish a system for tracking the delegation of tasks from the commander to the person who will follow through on the action, along with a method for follow-up.⁵⁷ Additionally, at the individual level, each commander must commit to carving out dedicated time to expand their

knowledge of all Air Force Instructions (AFIs), because almost every AFI in the inventory has a section delineating the duties of commanders at each level.⁵⁸

At an institutional level, overall training and mission execution will improve when there is adequate involvement by both full-time and part-time leaders for the preplanning of annual training events and deployments. ANG Wings should work to minimize the number of training events/exercises and maximize effort toward planning them well over multiple UTA weekends. Through proper preparedness over a lengthy amount of time, this will also ensure orders are cut with enough time for DSG members to deconflict those required military events with civilian jobs or school schedules.⁵⁹ Likewise, the workload for planning will balance across the entire workforce and not fall on only the full-time workers. In application, tasking company grade DSG officers with the planning of smaller training events will force develop them for greater responsibility later.⁶⁰ One senior leaders commented, “serving as a [project officer] (PROJO) for a TDY is more valuable for developing leadership skills than [Squadron Officer School] (SOS).”⁶¹ Ensuring opportunities for growth at earlier stages in their careers will serve as an added benefit for effective leadership development across the organization.

Networking throughout the ANG and/or Air Force community with the use of modern technology, the internet, and events will also provide traditional commanders opportunities to engage with their peers on a regular basis. One interviewee mentioned participation in a “closed/private” Facebook group specific to his career field where they can ask questions and pass along information relevant to the current environment.⁶² A similar group for commanders-only would serve the same purpose. If INFOSEC is of concern, the establishment of a SharePoint site would provide better information protection, as long as it can be accessed from home and not solely from a .mil domain. Internet sites like these have long been a valuable

resource in the Army for Company Commanders and would serve the ANG commander community very well. Social networking in conjunction with wing/state or career field events, such as the Airmen of the Year banquet or career field counsels, also provide valuable opportunities to engage face-to-face with commanders across the ANG or state and build strong relationships, particularly across large states like California.⁶³ Traditional commanders in particular must make a concerted effort to reach out to other officers in the State and other sister-units to develop those close-working relationships as the Total Force continues to downsize.⁶⁴

Recommendations For Decreasing Negative Impacts Within The Organization

All levels of leadership at the Wing must work together to decrease the negative impacts within the organization which may arise from having a traditional commander. Because the commander/full-time representative relationship is the lynchpin, as much as possible within hiring constraints, senior leadership should allow the traditional commander involvement in the selection of the full-time OPSO/superintendent.⁶⁵ If significant personality conflicts become apparent and are unresolvable, senior leadership must consider a “management directed” move to provide the traditional commander with full-time representation in harmony with the commander’s personality, goals, and unit vision.⁶⁶ Understandably, there may be repercussions affecting the reassigned full-time member’s job, however the repercussions of a toxic leadership team to an entire organization do not outweigh the negative consequences for one member.

At the traditional commander-level, there are also many leadership skills he/she can implement to decrease those negative impacts. First, commanders must clearly communicate and post in highly visible areas their unit vision and expectations. They must take an active role in setting weekly/monthly priorities for subordinates in the organization. As the OPSTEMPO increases across the ANG, the full-time force cannot meet every objective, therefore clearly

defined priorities empower subordinates to make decisions for how to allocate their time in accordance with the commander's guidance. Similarly, traditional commanders must clearly define the duties, expectations, and delegation of authority with their full-time representative. Most interviewees highlighted establishing a distinction between personnel actions and daily operations. The commander must maintain responsibility for handling the personnel issues while the full-timer runs the day-to-day operations of the unit. When applicable, the full-timer should send recommendations to the commander for personnel disciplinary actions and the commander makes the final decision. The traditional commander can assist in the endeavor to make fair decisions across the board by clearly defining accountability/disciplinary actions for the majority of common issues. If time is a necessity and the full-timer must make a decision without commander input, then they should follow up with a courtesy call to back-brief the commander on the decision. Likewise, should the full-time representative need to go further up the chain of command, all parties should make every effort to pull the traditional commander into the decision-making process before making a final decision.⁶⁷ Ultimately, for successful unity of command and effort, the traditional commander must learn to delegate tasks, trust the full-time staff, and have a system in place to follow up and course-correct when needed.

Recommendations For Developing Competitive Traditional Officers

The interviews provided many excellent suggestions for how to develop DSG officers to enable them to be competitive during the later stages of their career for command positions. A recurring theme was the value of periods of AD time to garner military experience. Every traditional commander interviewed either served on AD or in some form of full-time RC status during their military career. Each commander mentioned how those periods of full-time military duty prepared them for command. ANG leadership, particularly at the Wing-level, should

encourage and promote opportunities for DSG officers to seek out periods of full-time employment, particularly in managerial roles.⁶⁸ As the ANG continues at its current operational pace, Wings should request ADOS days to back-fill vacant key leadership positions at homestation due to deployments, in the same manner as the AD Air Force.⁶⁹ The resources tied to the deployments themselves are not enough to ensure units can meet the deployment taskings and the operational mission requirements simultaneously. These instances provide excellent opportunities for DSG officers to fill temporary AGR, ADOS, and Technician tours.⁷⁰

A renewed effort for the development of “officership” must be an area of attention, both by the individual officer and senior leaders across the enterprise. Broomall’s survey identified that senior NG leaders engaged in self-development through “civilian acquired skills, membership in professional associations, and networking with peers.”⁷¹ Senior leaders/commanders should encourage junior officers to participate in these types of groups for their own professional development at the earliest stages of their careers. His study also revealed a general consensus that a majority of senior NG officers surveyed lacked sufficient mentoring over the course of their careers.⁷² To correct this deficiency and in conjunction with short-term, full-time tours, Wing’s should establish an officer mentorship program to grow junior officer leadership skills while those members are more readily available for training during the work-week.⁷³ Another recommendation was to encourage DSG officers to attend weapons system councils/AFSC specific conventions and attendees should consolidate notes to share over UTA weekends to provide awareness of current issues.⁷⁴ One final simple mentoring tool mentioned was for seasoned leaders to bring junior leaders into the room during counseling session to “shadow” and observe the conduct of face-to-face interactions and leadership techniques.⁷⁵

Wing leadership must reemphasize and encourage temporary participation in the National Guard Bureau's (NGB) Statutory Tour (STAT) program for its DSG officers. "A senior executive remarked that for an Air Guard unit, all the wing's key positions are war-time tasked. The prolonged absence (10 months) for PME is viewed as having a negative impact on readiness. For the senior executives, there was little incentive to send his/her high potential officers to the [NGB]."⁷⁶ Despite the immediate impact, these tours provide excellent opportunities for rapid growth in leadership development, understanding of career field challenges, networking with other Wings, and large-scale policy development across the entire NG. An improved effort across the ANG to rotate officers through the hallways of NGB and return them back to the field should be an area of emphasis for senior NG leaders.

Recommendations For Further Study

Many of the concepts presented in this research are directly applicable for meeting General Goldfein's charge to self-examine the squadrons of the Total Force for the expressed purpose of revitalizing the ANG squadron to improve mission capabilities and meet future global threats. Despite the fact that the case study only examined one state and pool of interviewees consisted of 12 personnel, many of the recommendations are applicable across multiple areas of the ANG. The common themes expressed throughout the interviews demonstrated that many of these recommendations are pertinent to not only traditional commanders, but all traditional officers. Likewise, many of the ideas for improvement are useful for key leadership positions within the enlisted structure, since the development of traditional enlisted leaders is just as crucial as the officer corps. For further study, efforts could be geared toward larger-scale surveys with more anonymity to better identify areas of weakness or improvement which the smaller scale of this research prevented. Additionally, an examination of all the states would

establish whether or not the results of this research are reflective of just the CA ANG or of the entire ANG community as a whole.

CONCLUSION

Without a doubt, the ANG's involvement in the Global War on Terrorism has profoundly affected the development of its leaders in key positions of responsibility, particularly for the position of the traditional commander, both for good and for ill. The increased OPSTEMPO has placed demands on leaders at every level across the ANG to ensure they are trained, equipped, and professionally developed to meet the challenges of a complex global security environment. Lessons learned over the past decade prove that "learning from experience is the most effective path for development because real change is best induced by experiences that provide challenge, adversity, frustration, and struggle."⁷⁷ The ANG is well postured to examine how to provide the necessary experience and training to all its officers to guarantee the continued successful participation in the Total Force construct of the future.

In an effort to reinvigorate the ANG squadron, leaders across the enterprise must actively seek to develop and train the primary pool of officers—DSGs—to serve at the top levels of command leadership within their organizations. The recommendations pulled from the field for this research prove this goal is a difficult challenge, but is achievable. First, the ANG must examine the availability of resources at its disposal to provide these officers with the tools they require for success. Ensuring the adequacy of technological and financial resources specifically allocated to command positions filled by traditional officers, will best enable and equip them to successfully lead their organizations as the ANG continues to participate in US National Security objectives. The time to analyze the cost of incorporating converting the NG into an operational force is past due and the nation is morally obligated to provide adequate compensation

commiserate with rank and responsibility.⁷⁸ Likewise, efforts on the part of senior leaders throughout the ANG to reinvigorate the professional development of “officership” will ensure plenty of available talent to fill command billets at every level, whether full-time or part-time. “If, as anticipated, the operational and personnel tempo slows, time should be carved out for senior leader interaction with his/her officer corps.”⁷⁹ Yet, as senior leaders develop and incorporate professional development solutions, they must be mindful to keep those solutions realistic to the reality of serving in the military on a part-time basis. The entire NG community will reap huge dividends in empowering its leaders with a committed focus on these two major initiatives.

Upon assumption of command, as the 105th Fighter Wing Commander in 2013, Col Clark Highstrete reiterated the defining characteristic of the ANG when he stated, “The traditional guardsman is the cornerstone of the National Guard,” and summarized the goal for his tenure as a traditional Wing Commander:

Part of the challenge I was given was to pave the way, to show how it can be done ... We haven't had a traditional commander in recent memory. Our New Mexico guardsmen are all highly dedicated, selfless and professional airmen. The adjutant general has made the service of our traditional Guard members in particular a top priority. What better way to emphasize and realize that priority than to have a traditional guardsman as a commander?⁸⁰

This examination of California's five ANG Wings further cements the importance of traditional commanders at every level within the organization. This study uncovered the surprising evidence that, in 2017, traditional officers do serve in 40 percent of the command billets across the state. While they do face specific constraints and LIMFACS, these commanders and their full-time representatives communicated throughout the interview process, their unified commitment to leading their Airmen with excellence. As the ANG continues to adjust its priorities and policies for involvement in the Total Force, senior leaders must give careful

consideration to the recommendations unearthed in this research for how to further enable and train traditional commanders for success.

ENDNOTES

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- ¹ Statement of MG Brian G. Neal, acting director, Air National Guard, in House, *The National Guard and Reserve Posture Hearing: Hearings before the House Appropriations Committee Subcommittee on Defense*, 114th Cong., 2nd sess., March 22, 2016, 2.
 - ² James G. Roche, Secretary of the Air Force, "Airmen of the Air National Guard – Twice the Citizens!" (Remarks to the Air National Guard Leadership Conference, Baltimore, MD, Dec 2003), 4.
 - ³ Christina E. Wormuth, et al., *The Future of the National Guard and Reserves: Beyond the Goldwater-Nichols Phase III Report* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, July 2006), 17.
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APPENDIX 1 – SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The following were the top ten most frequently asked interview questions to spur conversation:

1. What are some of the challenges to being (or working for) a part-time commander?
2. What resources do you have to access your military work from home?
3. How many hours a week do you put in from home? How are you compensated?
4. How many additional days do you work at the base on top of UTA weekends? How many AT days do you do a year?
5. What battle-rhythm have you established to keep communication flowing between UTA weekends?
6. What strengths do part-time commanders bring to an organization?
7. What weaknesses do part-time commanders bring to an organization?
8. What recommendations do you have to enable part-time officers be competitive for command?
9. How does your military job affect your civilian job and vice versa?
10. Do you feel adequately trained for your job? Have you had to cross-train?

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