

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

*Form Approved
OMB No. 0704-0188*

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1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY)		2. REPORT TYPE Master's of Military Studies		3. DATES COVERED (From - To) SEP 2019 - APR 2020	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Amy Talent Management: Benefits for the Army National Guard				5a. CONTRACT NUMBER N/A	
				5b. GRANT NUMBER N/A	
				5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER N/A	
6. AUTHOR(S) Chonko, Aaron W. Major, US Army				5d. PROJECT NUMBER N/A	
				5e. TASK NUMBER N/A	
				5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER N/A	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) USMC Command and Staff College Marine Corps University 2076 South Street Quantico, VA 22134-5068				8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER N/A	
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)				10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S) Dr. Bradford Wineman	
				11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S) N/A	
12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release, distribution unlimited.					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES					
14. ABSTRACT The Army's current Personnel system is based on concepts that were relevant over seventy years ago. However, the Army's four new talent management initiatives, under the Talent Management Framework, are driving the new personnel system to take more of an informational aged approach. The Army Talent and Alignment Process, Assessments, Promotions and Selections, and Flexible Career Paths are the initiatives which will maximize human potential and enhance total force readiness. People are the Army's greatest asset, regardless of component, and they are critical in meeting the Nation's strategic objectives in today's complex operational environment. Every person has talent, which is defined by their Knowledge Skills and Behaviors (KSBs), and the better the Army understands their people, the better they will be at acquiring, developing, employing, and retaining them. The National Defense Strategy and the Army leadership are prioritizing these initiatives and are promoting "people" as their number one priority, which creates opportunities and resources for the ARNG States and Territories to leverage regardless of their uniqueness and fundamental differences. The National Guard Bureau (NGB) is currently allocating personnel to the Talent Management Task Force and are facilitating State led talent management initiatives, but it is the individual efforts from the States that will make this successful.					
15. SUBJECT TERMS Army National Guard; Talent Management; Personnel Management; Army Talent Alignment Process, Officer Management					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT	b. ABSTRACT	c. THIS PAGE			USMC Command and Staff College
Unclass	Unclass	Unclass	UU	30	19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER (Include area code) (703) 784-3330 (Admin Office)

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MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

TITLE: Amy Talent Management: Benefits for the Army National Guard

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

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AY 2019-20

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Date: 17 April 2020

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Date: 17 April 2020

Executive Summary

Title: Army Talent Management: Benefits for the Army National Guard

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Thesis: The ARNG States and Territories must prioritize the Army's talent management initiatives now, while the capability, resources, and support exist, to fully realize the Total Force benefits.

Discussion: The Army's current Personnel system is based on concepts that were relevant over seventy years ago. However, the Army's four new talent management initiatives, under the Talent Management Framework, are driving the new personnel system to take more of an informational aged approach. The Army Talent and Alignment Process, Assessments, Promotions and Selections, and Flexible Career Paths are the initiatives which will maximize human potential and enhance total force readiness. People are the Army's greatest asset, regardless of component, and they are critical in meeting the Nation's strategic objectives in today's complex operational environment. Every person has talent, which is defined by their Knowledge Skills and Behaviors (KSBs), and the better the Army understands their people, the better they will be at acquiring, developing, employing, and retaining them. The National Defense Strategy and the Army leadership are prioritizing these initiatives and are promoting "people" as their number one priority, which creates opportunities and resources for the ARNG States and Territories to leverage regardless of their uniqueness and fundamental differences. The National Guard Bureau (NGB) is currently allocating personnel to the Talent Management Task Force and are facilitating State led talent management initiatives, but it is the individual efforts from the States that will make this successful.

Conclusion: The four talent management initiatives provide tremendous opportunities and capability for the ARNG to increase readiness, regardless of the differences between the components, and it is crucial for the ARNG to invest now to maximize their full potential which rest in their people.

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Preface

Talent management is a concept that is growing within industry and the US Military, especially since there is technology and research to facilitate and support its implementation. This is an interesting topic for me because I believe people are the Army's greatest strength, and in my experience, there is not enough emphasis on developing people and putting them in positions and jobs that maximize their potential. Many great battles and successful military campaigns relied upon the minds and expertise of those who planned and executed them.

This was a challenging and rewarding journey for me and through my research I learned that there are no shortages of great ideas. However, there are many system and process barriers which prevent the progress of these ideas and when the opportunity presents itself, we must capitalize on it. First, I would like to thank God for his blessings and my family for their patience as I progressed through this research process. They provide the balance in my life and the motivation to do my best. I want to acknowledge my mentor, Dr. Bradford Wineman, for his guidance, and encouragement. His timely and quality feedback allowed me to navigate through this process. I want to also acknowledge LTC Jennifer McGhee who is part of the Army's Talent Management Task Force. She was instrumental in providing constructive feedback that ultimately improved the final product.

Introduction

The Army's legacy personnel system was based on concepts from the 1940s, which incrementally changed throughout time. The Army is currently prioritizing its transformation to a system focused on talent management. They are utilizing existing technological capabilities and applying talent management initiatives to implement it. Talent management focuses on the individual and takes into consideration their uniqueness and works to maximize the contribution of every Army member through a web-based information system tool.¹ Gaining more information about an individual allows the Army to make better personnel management decision on individual development and employment to the force.² The foundation of the Army is its people who provide the ability for the nation to maintain its decisive advantage over current and future adversaries.³

The Talent Management Framework principles are about acquiring, developing, employing, and retaining the right people, which the Army considers its greatest asset.⁴ The Army is currently focusing on four initiatives under the Talent Management Framework, which will enhance readiness by increasing trust and transparency and maximize human potential.⁵ The first initiative is the Army Talent and Alignment Process (ATAP). This process allows commanders and individuals to take a more active role in the assignment process.⁶ The foundation of this process is the individual Knowledge, Skills, Behaviors, and Preferences (KSB-Ps) of every officer captured in the Assignment Interactive Module 2 (AIM2) software, which will be subsumed by the Integrated Personnel and Pay System Army (IPPS-A).⁷ The Army's second initiative is on building a comprehensive assessment framework for officers.⁸ These assessments will provide a common operating picture to identify an individual's KSBs.⁹ Currently the Army is developing prototypes and using pilots to determine how to use the assessments to capture relevant data about the officer's talents.¹⁰ The data captured in these

assessments will provide the Army with better information for assignments, development, promotions, and selections decisions.¹¹ Third, the Army is enabling officers to have flexible career paths by developing more options.¹² Lastly, the Army is changing how they select and promote Officers.¹³ These four initiatives along with the nine new authorities granted by the 2019 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) provide the Army the flexibility in determining the characteristics of a future talent-based system for the entire force.¹⁴ In order to stay competitive and maximize the Army's potential, the Army's talent management must attract and retain the nation's best talents and employ those talents where they are needed most.¹⁵

While the Army's active component is leading these initiatives the movement towards the new talent management concept is one that benefits the Total Force, to include the Army National Guard, Reserves, Soldiers, and individual units. The individual unit can pick their personnel; the individual can preference their next assignment; and the organization can gather important data that will assist in improving the organization and their people. However, it is probable that not everyone in the force will achieve the same level of benefit and there will be some organizational growing pains and resistance to change, particularly in the Army National Guard which is distinct from the Active Force in various ways. They have separate missions, priorities, processes, and culture which influence how the components manage their people which will complicate the transition to this new system. Regardless, the Army's initiatives to talent management will provide opportunities for both components. The ARNG States and Territories must prioritize the Army's talent management initiatives now, while the capability, resources, and support exist, to fully realize the Total Force benefits.

Active versus Army National Guard (ARNG).

The Army has three main components which are Active Army, Army National Guard, and Army Reserves. This paper will solely focus on the differences between Active Army and the Army National Guard. The obvious difference is that the Active component serves full-time, with a 24/7 commitment, and the majority of the ARNG serves part time, one weekend out of every month and 2 weeks during the summer for annual training.¹⁶ The Active also fulfills a federal mission, while the ARNG serves a dual mission.¹⁷ The Governor under Title 32 and the President of the United States under Title 10. Active Army has one chain of command and the ARNG has 54 states and territories with their own chain of command. This makes it very difficult from the Guard perspective to establish a universal policy to govern talent management initiatives. Even though these States and Territories wear the same uniform, there are distinct cultural norms which creates additional challenges when implementing a whole Army approach. Success will depend the State's ability to tailor their needs within the construct of the Army talent management initiatives. These are a few key differences that drive some of the unique challenges the Army faces when providing a total force solution on talent management.

Current Personnel System

The legacy personnel system's foundational platform is built on the industrial age model concepts put in place following World War II with the signing of the Officer Personnel Act (OPA) in 1947.¹⁸ This was a one size fits all system echoed the way of thinking during that era.¹⁹ The dominating themes during that time which inspired the 1947 OPA were "uniformness" between the services, emphasis on a "young and vigorous" officer corps, and the "remobilization" capability of the peacetime force.²⁰ One of the most significant changes was a competitive up or out promotion system. This was a change from the previous system that

focused on seniority which General Dwight D. Eisenhower was a sharp critic of. When he was Chief of Staff, he told Congress, “I think that no great argument would have to be presented to show that our promotion system has been unsatisfactory. Until we got to the grade of general officer, it was absolutely a lock step promotion; and short of almost a crime being committed by an officer, there were ineffectual ways of eliminating a man.”²¹ The idea was “keeping the outflow at the top so as to keep your vigorous body underneath”.²²

There were some modifications to the personnel process following the Defense Officer Personnel Management Act (DOPMA) of 1980. Congress enacted DOPMA on 12 December 1980, which updated and replaced existing rules and regulations on the management of military officers.²³ It also updated the percentage of field grade officers (O-4 through O-6) that each service could have.²⁴ The expectations of DOPMA was that it would “maintain a high-quality, numerically sufficient officer corps, provide career opportunity that would attract and retain the numbers of high caliber officers needed, [and] provide reasonably consistent career opportunity among the services.”²⁵ DOPMA preserved the up or out construct from 1947, but reformed the reserve officer commissions and grade controls that was originally established to maintain a historically larger peacetime military force.²⁶ According to a RAND assessment, DOPMA was unable to control the officer growth in the 1980s nor managed the force reduction in the 1990s.²⁷ The Army’s legacy personnel system has lasted 70 years by adapting to the needs of the Army through incremental changes. The shortcomings were manageable, but the Army’s talent management initiatives require a full transformation that starts with a new personnel management system. There is a point where the return on investment outweighs the cost of a new platform.

Issues

The Army's legacy personnel management framework and lack of technological capability has caused assignment, retention, and promotion issues. The Army would not have maintained their current personnel system for so long, if there were not some positive attributes. According to Major General (MG) JP McGee, the Army Talent Management Task Force (TMTF) Director, the positive characteristics in the legacy system are: fair, scalable, predictable, developmental, and resilient.²⁸ However, the current gaps are adaptable, incentivizes standard career paths, data poor, and time based.²⁹ He recognized that a new system would not be much of an improvement if it improved the shortfalls at the expense of the existing systems strengths. The TMTF is integrating and synchronizing the Army's efforts which will bridge this gap by transforming the personnel management system through a talent management-based approach.³⁰

Technological changes present opportunities for the Army that were not available before. For example, there are information technology (IT) systems that provide the capability for the Army to manage large amounts of data, and there is enough cognitive and data science to select, retain, and develop talent. The IT system used today was written in code from the 1980s to early 1990s and does not provide a way to capture individual knowledge, skills, and behaviors (KSBs) nor does it have the capability to align or assign people to jobs.³¹ The current system also does not have the ability to model outcomes which provides policy makers the information needed to make critical decisions on personnel policies.³² For example, as MG McGee pointed out, the current system cannot project the consequences of decisions like increasing the mandatory time for command from 12 to 18 months. The Army Senior Leaders (ASLs) could make better informed decisions if they knew to what degree these decisions would impact matters like

increased wait times for command or backed up Command and General Staff College lines.³³

The Army's legacy personnel management system is not taking advantage of today's technology.

The legacy system is based on an up-or-out model is effective at standardizing career timelines for a desired officer structure but it lacks the flexibility to retain or promote officer's with unconventional career paths. In 2010, a study found that only six percent of Army officers thought the service did a good job of retaining its best leaders.³⁴ One reason for this is, Officer's selected to fellowships or advanced civil schooling to receive advanced degrees were not able to complete their key developmental assignments within the timeline required for the next rank.³⁵ These officers have been forced out because they were not able to promote because of the system's lack of flexibility. Additionally, this system discourages officers from broadening themselves which leads to a less developed officer corps. The up-or-out construct incentivizes standard career paths which creates predictability, but lacks the adaptability to promote and retain its top talent.

People want to have "buy in" on their career and feel like they have a say, but the current rigid structure does not provide the flexibility to do so, and it does not accommodate individual preference very well towards assignments.³⁶ The process often forces people into assignments they do not want in locations they do not prefer. One of the reasons why the current system does not maximize officer preference is that it does not consider all qualified service members for a particular job.³⁷ The smaller cohorts have less people and may do a better job with this, but the larger cohorts, like combat arms branches, are only providing their officers with a fraction of the positions available. There could be several reasons why this is occurring, but one consideration is the legacy system does not have the breadth or depth of available data to identify all qualified officers for a particular position. Additionally, the Army does not have organizational alignment

to aggregate the strategic management of officers.³⁸ There are at least seven entities that take part in managing the Army's people.³⁹ There is not one person or organization overall responsible. This decreases the unity of effort and reduces accountability and consistency.⁴⁰ The process often forces people into assignments they do not want to do, which will never be 100% solved, but if the Army provides a system that has the capability to maximize human preference, the Soldier may trust that the organization is doing their best and be less critical of how they are managed.

Talent Management Reform: Why Now?

The issues of the existing legacy system are nothing new, but the Army is now making it a priority to fix because the Army can no longer rely on its superior technological force to provide the military edge over its adversary. General James McConville declared people were his number one priority on his first day as Army Chief of Staff.⁴¹ Moreover, the National Defense Strategy (NDS) outlined creativity and talent of the American warfighter as the greatest enduring strength of the nation, and established "building a more lethal force" as the number one line of effort.⁴² The Army must maximize their relative strength through people in order to maintain that asymmetric advantage over near peer adversaries like Russia and China. The United States is facing an increasingly complex global security environment, with the advancements in technology and adversary capabilities.⁴³ According to Moore's Law, technological progress is growing exponentially.⁴⁴ This is making it more difficult to maintain a strategic advantage because it is too costly and physically impossible to develop and field a timely capability with a lasting benefit over and adversary. There will always be that gap between the Army's capability and what is technologically feasible. Therefore, the Army must rely on the strength of its people, more now than ever, to fill that space. The National Defense

Strategy and the Army leadership are prioritizing talent management reform now because people are the Army's number one asset in building a more lethal force, which is essential to maintain the asymmetric advantage against the nation's adversaries.

Transformation: An Integrated Holistic Approach

According to the *Talent Management Concept of Operations for Force 2025 and Beyond*, the Army will risk having numerous disparate, redundant, and conflicting efforts not synchronized if an integrated holistic approach is not taken for transforming human capital management.⁴⁵ This will result in wasted time and money.⁴⁶ Human capital transformation addresses principles and functions at the enterprise level as opposed to just focusing on list of management reforms and solutions.⁴⁷ An integrated approach includes all Army components. This way of thinking will help ensure the whole to be greater than the sum of its parts.⁴⁸ MG McGee notes that his guidance from the Army Chief of Staff was that he was not to take the current system and make it better on the margins, but it was to create a new and better system.⁴⁹ MG McGee said this meant making a ten "x" change versus a ten percent change, which leads to looking at the problem fundamentally different.⁵⁰ This applies to both the Active and National Guard component. All 54 states and territories need to address their own set of problems with the same transformation mindset MG McGee described. Transformation starts by leveraging the National Guard Bureau and integrating existing talent management initiatives formed by the Army Senior Leaders and the Talent Management Task Force.

Talent Transformation Initiatives: Shared Readiness

The, "Talent Management Concept of Operation for Force 2025 and Beyond" outlined three major goals for transformation. The first goal focuses on providing a leader with the authority to integrate and coordinate the planning and execution of the talent management

functions. This goal was reinforced in the 2018 “Army Vision” under the third line of effort, “Reform.” It identified the Talent Management Task Force as the lead agent to develop a new talent management strategy and identify additional ways to reform the personnel system.⁵¹ MG McGee is leading this task force with representation from all Army components. The second goal highlights the importance of consistency across the organization with well-defined principles that are suitable for each cohort and career field. The Army identifies 20 guiding principles broken down into five categories with four overall functions, which are acquisition, employment, development, and retention.⁵² These functions and principles provide a framework for the strategic implementation of talent management across the Army to achieve its vision.⁵³ The third goal focuses on the integration and management of the talent management requirements and capability gaps. This is completed by utilizing DOTMLPF-P (Doctrine, Organization, Training, Material, Leadership, and Education, Personnel, Facilities, and Policy) analysis which helps determine if a material or non-material solution is required to fill these capability gaps.⁵⁴

The functional integrators, collaborating these solutions, are part of the Talent Management Task Force. They established the following four initiatives to transform the personnel system.⁵⁵

- 1) Army Talent Alignment Process (ATAP)
- 2) Assessments
- 3) Promotions and Selections
- 4) Flexible Career Paths

Some of these initiatives are further along than others because of organizational constraints, but they all have the focus of senior leaders like General McConville who declared that people are his number one priority.⁵⁶ ATAP is currently drawing the most attention. It

focuses on transforming the way the Army aligns officer's preferences to jobs.⁵⁷ ATAP also just completed its first iteration for the winter 2019-20 assignment cycle.⁵⁸

ATAP-Army

ATAP is a decentralized, regulated, market-style hiring process which uses more detailed information about the individual and units to align officers with jobs compared to the traditional process.⁵⁹ Officers are matched according to preferences which are shaped by their unique Knowledge, Skills, and Behaviors (KSBs), which are otherwise known as the components of talent.⁶⁰ According to the Army, talent is defined as the unique intersection of knowledge, skills, behaviors, and preferences (KSB-P) inherent to every individual.⁶¹ The following are the Army's KSB-P definitions and guiding principles:⁶²

Knowledge: Facts, information, and skills acquired by a person through experience, education, or training.

Skills: The ability to apply knowledge to a task.

Behaviors: The way one acts or conducts oneself, especially towards others.

Preferences: Interests, career ambitions, and personal life goals.

Approved ATAP guiding principles:⁶³

1. Every officer is in ATAP and self-professes talent information using the assignment interactive module (AIM2).
2. Every unit is in ATAP, advertises and describes their organizational vacancies, and commanders actively participate in the hiring process using AIM2.
3. Readiness determines which positions are in the ATAP and available for fill.
4. Every job is filled through ATAP using AIM2 – units provided the data to turn a vacancy into a job.
5. Readiness, professional development, and senior leader guidance determine the eligibility rules for assignments
6. ATAP operates with increased transparency and, if the market fails, OPMD clears markets with an emphasis on officer and unit preferences.

These principles increase transparency and allows the individual to see every assignment they are eligible for.⁶⁴ It also removes the assignment officer from the middle of the process and empowers the individual officer to have conversations with the unit that is hiring.⁶⁵ According to MG McGee, this system will remove some of the artificial constraints in the officer management

process, like an officer going to a Reserved Officer Training Corps (ROTC) instructor position prior to captain's career course or an Infantry officer going light infantry to light infantry from lieutenant to captain.⁶⁶ Additionally, the hiring authority will reside at the brigade commander and above level, and human resource command will only weigh in if there is a failure in the market to find the proper match.⁶⁷ One risk is that historically hard to fill locations will be even harder to fill, but the Army plans to incentivize the officer with brevet promotions at hard to fill locations. Currently there are 225 positions identified for brevet promotions.⁶⁸ Brevet promotions are temporary, but allow a junior grade officers to serve in positions of higher rank with the pay of that rank.⁶⁹ For the marketplace to work as intended, the guiding principles must be followed and individuals must preference deep, meaning they need to preference all available and eligible positions.⁷⁰

ATAP provides officers, units, and the Army with relative benefits. With respect to the officer, they gain transparency in the assignment process while improving the ability to manage their own careers.⁷¹ Individual preference within the system also carries more weight and increases the chances of the officer receiving his or her preference.⁷² The unit also gains transparency in the process, and will have the opportunity to build their teams based upon desired KSBs. Properly employing officer talents will increase unit readiness.⁷³ During this process, the Army gains insights on what KSBs their officers have and what KSBs units want.⁷⁴ Understanding these differences will provide relevant information towards recruitment, development, and retention efforts. This allows the Army to manage talent based on multiple variables versus strength numbers alone.⁷⁵ The Army will also gain a repository of data to conduct numerous types of analytics, some of which can be used to increase the effectiveness of the Army talent alignment process.⁷⁶

The 11 December 2019 United States Army Forces Command (FORSCOM) G1 After Action Review (AAR) yielded some positive data and initial feedback to improve ATAP. The data from the last assignment cycle resulted in 45% of the officers receiving a one to one match. This means the officer preferenced the job number one and the job or unit preferenced the individual number one.⁷⁷ These results are based on 14,500 officers and 14,690 jobs in the marketplace. The more significant concerns from the user was market volatility. Units indicated issues with requisitions getting added to and falling off during the market, along with officers being added and leaving the market late.⁷⁸ The release of the active component major promotions board results also increased the market volatility.⁷⁹ Improving the user interface were some of the minor issues to fix. Most of the feedback and AAR comments could be resolved by adjusting ATAP business rule and processes, unit and individual training, or by modifying the AIM 2 software.

Assignment Interactive Module 2.0 (AIM 2) is a web based system designed to enhance the officer management process by facilitating the communication between the unit, individual, and the Officer Personnel Management Directorate (OPMD).⁸⁰ AIM 2 will assist ATAP in utilizing data to employ a regulated market mechanism to match officer talents to unit requirements.⁸¹ AIM 2 is the active duty officer talent management bridge to the Integrated Personnel and Pay System-Army (IPPS-A).⁸² Officers will continue to utilize AIM 2 to access ATAP until IPPS-A comes online for the active duty.⁸³

IPPS-A is a vehicle for the Army's people first strategy.⁸⁴ The strategy released in October 2019 describes how the Army will shift from simply "distributing personnel" to more deliberately managing the Soldier's talents.⁸⁵ When fully developed, IPPS-A will provide multi component visibility on readiness and a comprehensive transparent personnel and pay record.⁸⁶

Total force visibility, talent and data, and audibility are the three essential capabilities that the personnel system will provide to the Army.⁸⁷ For talent and data will provide a 25 point talent profile. This data will assist with the talent alignment process as the data will provide not only the Soldier's KSBs, but also additional data on experiences and readiness.⁸⁸ Release 3 of IPPS-A is expected to go live in December of 2021 to the active component, which should capture most of the 25-point data.⁸⁹ IPPS-A and AIM 2 are critical enablers to achieving the Army's people strategy and completing the talent alignment process.

Another critical enabler to ATAP is the unique algorithm that optimizes unit and individual preferences in the ATAP.⁹⁰ The computer algorithm called the Army Talent Alignment Algorithm (ATAA) attempts to match Soldiers to their most preferred assignment first.⁹¹ If the unit also preferences the Soldier, a tentative match will occur.⁹² However, a Soldier will be removed from the tentative match, if a higher preference Soldier is more preferred by that unit. During this process the Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP) and Married Army Couples Program (MACP) are considered and can influence an assignment match.⁹³ Both the unit and the Soldier must rank each other for a match to occur, so it is important for the Soldier and unit to both preference deep to prevent unmatching which could result in individuals receiving an assignment to a lesser-desired duty station.⁹⁴ Preferencing deep means that both the unit and Soldier must order all available positions or people. ATAA is the algorithm for AIM 2 and the IPPS-As marketplace which will provide the maximum benefit to both the officer and unit.

The four talent management initiatives are relevant but will affect the Army Guard differently. There are as many similarities as differences between the Guard and that is why there is Army Guard representation within the TMTF and IPPS-A team. The National Guard

Bureau (NGB) is currently allocating personnel to the Talent Management Task Force and are facilitating State led talent management initiatives. The NGB is the primary coordinating entity and a channel of communication that enables the Chief of the National Guard Bureau (CNGB) to inform national leaders and support The Adjutant Generals (TAG) for each State.⁹⁵ NGB is not a higher headquarters command. Therefore, they do not issue orders. However, they do issue directives, regulations, and publications consistent with approved policies of the Army.⁹⁶ The NGB also allocates resources and facilitates and supports training of ARNG members and units.⁹⁷ Consequently, the NGB is facilitating the Army's Talent Management efforts for the ARNG. Due to fundamental differences and uniqueness of the ARNG, they are not on pace with the Active component. However, they are leading the Integrated Personnel and Pay System Army (IPPS-A) software implementation efforts, which is designed to manage talent by matching the service's requirements to Soldiers' KSB-Ps.⁹⁸ IPPS-A is used in 27 Army National Guard States and Territories and is crucial towards successful implementation of the talent management initiatives.⁹⁹

ATAP-ARNG

Since most ARNG Soldiers serve part-time, they typically have a civilian job. These jobs may or may not correlate with the Soldier's military occupational specialty (MOS). Sometimes these Soldiers have advanced degrees or special certifications, which provides a unique capability the unit can leverage. The Soldiers civilian careers accentuate their KSBs and provide the ARNG with a more diverse talent pool compared to the Active component. Additionally, the Soldier's civilian career and part time status as a Soldier cause them to have different incentives and motivations in their career paths compared to an active duty Soldier. For example, an ARNG Soldier's preference for his or her next assignment could be driven by different factors

than an active duty Soldier. An Active duty officer on average may base their preferences on career enhancements, whereas an ARNG officer may preference more towards positions based on proximity to their residence. This information is not known, and it will not be until there is a system in place to capture it. Understanding what motivates a Soldier is critical information that can be applied to retention efforts. Also, centralized KSB data can increase readiness by querying the force to find Soldiers to fill critical hard to fill positions which require a unique skill set, like cyber. The individual unit within a State may know their Soldiers and Officers, and have a good understanding of what skills, degrees, or civilian jobs they have, but that data is not part of centrally managed system. Compartmentalized data does not help the entire force or individual States, and efforts to resolve this should be welcomed and supported by the States. The talent management initiatives through IPPS-A provides numerous capabilities, and all States should leverage the capabilities so all can benefit.

Regardless of the advertised benefits that this new personnel management system will bring, States and Soldiers may resist. It is common for an organization and their people to resist change just because it is something different, but there are some valid fears. Each individual State and Territory must maintain their own readiness levels for their own missions. Once all individual KSB data is captured in IPPS-A, there is a possibility that the data could be shared at the national level, which means other States and even the active component could view their data. This may encourage the active component to identify and potentially engage guard individuals who possess critical skills needed to fill active duty positions. The States fear they would lose more Soldiers to the active component which would negatively affect their readiness levels. Even though the States maintain release authority for a Soldier transitioning to active duty, they do not typically deny a Soldier's request because an individual leaving does not

jeopardize or prevent the state or unit from completing its mission. However, if the active component utilizes the new system as a recruiting tool, it could draw more transfer request under the “Call to Active Duty” program causing a larger readiness issue. This may be a valid fear but there is more to gain from ATAP concept that will outweigh the unsubstantiated concerns of some.

Just as Soldiers leave the National Guard for active duty, many Soldiers leave the active component to join the Guard. Guard Soldiers also transfer between state. In both situations, there is no reliable way for a Soldier to identify all ARNG vacancies available throughout the nation. Soldiers must call individual States which is overwhelming and time consuming. This could be mitigated by each ARNG State and Territory adopting the ATAP and its guiding principles. Specifically, ensuring each ARNG unit captures their vacancies and every Soldier captures their KSB-Ps. This increases the chances of retaining a Soldier leaving Active duty, and it also increases the ARNG’s retention by providing Soldiers visibility to other States vacancies and making state transfers more fluid. Some Soldiers leave the ARNG because their State does not have a vacancy available for promotion, and they do not want to change their MOS just to make the next rank. State transfers provide another option to the Soldier, but the current process is cumbersome and most Soldiers do not know what vacancies are available other States. The IPPS-A guided by the ATAP principles provides the potential to make this process easier for the Soldier and unit, which will increase retention and readiness levels across the total force.

Soldiers are just as important as the individual units in the talent alignment processes, but they too may resist and be reluctant to provide their KSB data. Soldiers may be perfectly content with their military job and may not want to disclose their unique skills and qualifications because they are fearful of the pressure they may receive from the unit to change career paths or accept

positions of higher responsibility. ARNG Soldiers have various civilian careers that align well to military jobs, but just because a Soldier is a doctor in the civilian world, does not mean they want to be a doctor in the military. That Soldier may like being an Infantry officer and enjoys the change of pace. Regardless, according to ATAP principles, the Soldier preferences are viewed as most important, which should empower the Soldier and incentivize them to support the initiative. However, it is up to the Guard and unit to incentivize and promote the trust and confidence in the system and process for it to be accepted.

Any new system or process change requires training and IPPS-A is no different. The ARNG has minimal time and competing priorities. Therefore, it may be easy to neglect or resist. However, States are currently sharing IPPS-A system knowledge with each other and developing working groups to solve internal issues. The Army IPPS-A team is comprised of individuals from each component and are assisting each State with migration. Additionally, States are calling on each other to assist with the process. The Talent Management Task Force is also a multi-component team with experienced individuals who are listening to what the units and individuals are saying and making adjustment to improve the system and their experience. Efforts like these, reflect a motivated and inspired workforce who are willing to help each other regardless of COMPO. It is important for every State to invest upfront and prioritize this transformation now because the resources and support are available and enthusiasm is present. Now is the time to invest, waiting may reduce the potential benefit.

Units and individual all have valid concerns about this transformation but the unit and organization should not resist change because of their own doubts and uncertainties. These negative outlooks often exaggerate the potential disadvantages while stifling the true benefits. Additionally, the mindset that Active duty is out for their own benefit will create animosity.

They are an organization with their own chain of command, but they can benefit from each other if they take a cooperative approach towards the talent management initiatives. The closer the States work with the Active component and each other, the more they realize the benefits. They will also be in a better position to understand the potential shortcomings and create measures to prevent them. The talent management initiatives will create transparency and increase the readiness of the entire force, and there is nothing preventing States from incorporating the principles of talent management or an officer's KSB-Ps to their processes.

Assessments-Army

Individual assessments are another initiative the Army is doing to transform the current personnel system, specifically objective assessments. Currently there are not many objective assessments for Officers in the Army. The APFT is an example of an objective assessment, whereas the current Officer Evaluation Report is subjective. The Army is utilizing the Captains Career Course (CCC) and Command and General Staff College (CGSC) as opportunities to conduct these assessments.¹⁰⁰ For example, every officer in the captain's career course is now required to take a Graduate Record Examination (GRE).¹⁰¹ This test will assist the Army with identifying what officers are better fit for advanced civil schooling opportunities. CCC is also investigating other cognitive ability testing which can be used to better develop officers.¹⁰²

Assessments-ARNG

The ARNG will also take the GRE during the Captain's Career Course, but this only extends to resident students and the data may not be the best discriminator in assignments and promotions. Therefore, the ARNG should persuade the active component to develop better cognitive assessments that could objectively capture an Officer's mental competency. The ARNG could leverage existing self-administered online testing that is more affordable and

provides better flexibility to administer to a part-time force. In 2020, the Army is expected to pay approximately \$800,000 for 4,000 Captains to take the GRE. Now is the time for the Guard to offer assistance and experiment with these tests. The Guard is already providing the development efforts for IPPS-A prior to fielding to the Active Component, so it is reasonable to think the ARNG can assist with cognitive assessment developments. All can benefit from the flexibility, and potential cost savings it will provide. These assessments will also increase the transparency in the assessments process by providing an objective benchmark, ultimately increasing the trust between the Soldier and organization. Organizational effectiveness will improve and people will be less likely to depart the organization due to a reduction in organizational performance.

Promotions and Selections- Army

The Army is not only using cognitive assessments to develop talent, but are also conducting personality assessments to promote and select battalion commanders, which is change from the past where the primary measure was subjective performance reports. The Battalion Commander Assessment Program (BCAP) is a new requirement for officer's to compete for battalion command and is used to assess Lieutenant Colonel (LTC) fitness for command and strategic leadership potential.¹⁰³ BCAP is a four-day event which supplements the current Centralized Selection List (CSL) process.¹⁰⁴ According to MG McGee, one of the most critical decisions the Army makes is during the LTC CSL process because the officers who are selected for Battalion Command are the same officer to be selected to Brigade Command and will end being those General Officers.¹⁰⁵ The current CSL board process for LTCs involves 25 board members reviewing 1,450 files and only spending on average 57 seconds to review each file.¹⁰⁶ The board reviews the individual officer's Officer Record Brief (ORB) and Officer

Evaluation Reports (OERs), and by the end each officer is ranked 1 through N. The board does not consider cognitive aptitude, strategic potential, communication skills, or mental fitness. The BCAP process will bridge the gap between what the board considers and what it does not by conducting additional personality interviews and personality and cognitive assessments.¹⁰⁷ The information learned through BCAP can be used to improve other promotion and selection processes.¹⁰⁸ BCAP may require additional manpower and resources, but the investment shall pay dividends for the individual and organization.

Promotions and Selections- ARNG

Currently BCAP is only used for Active Duty, but the concept could be applied to the ARNG. Promotion processes between States may be similar, but each State and Territory has their own system and processes to select and promote Officers. State's typically follow a traditional promotion board system, where Officers are ranked by board consisting of senior Officer from their State. Using the BCAP methodology towards promotions would provide uniformity and sense of increased confidence in the promotion processes in each State. States cannot promote officers without a vacancy which means an Officer may be performing exceptionally, but if the State does not have a billet for them, they cannot be promoted. This causes inconsistency in promotion rates and it makes it difficult for Officers to anticipate their next promotion. This career instability reduces an Officer's confidence in their State's promotion process and make it more difficult for a State to retain the Officer. Officers also have a tendency to view their States promotion process as more subjective because the States are small enough to where everyone knows everyone. Promotion board members personally know their Officer Corps, which causes a bias when ranking the Officers, increasing the overall subjectivity of an already subjective process. Board members may not show personal bias, but it

is very difficult for a State's promotion board to shake the image of the "good Ol' boy" system no matter how formal you make it. However, utilizing a hybrid system that uses both subjective and objective methods, like BCAP, would increase Officer confidence and morale, leading to increased unit readiness and confidence.

The active component's BCAP efforts involving cognitive assessments are a step in the right direction, but it is important to point out that capturing cognitive data prior to battalion command would be valuable and beneficial to the entire force. The earlier the Army captures this data, the better understanding they will have in identifying and determining correlations between cognitive ability, performance, and occupational specialties. This information can assist the Army in optimizing human performance and could assist in the development of advanced cognition, which is designed to improve human cognitive abilities.¹⁰⁹ Both the individual and unit will realize benefits; therefore, the ARNG should make every effort to apply the BCAP methodologies early in an officer's career.

Flexible Career Paths-Army

The FY19 National Defense Authorization ACT (NDAA) gave nine new authorities aimed at transforming the Army's personnel system.¹¹⁰ Two of these authorities have added flexibility to officer career paths. The first is section 502 which authorizes direct commission up to the rank of Colonel.¹¹¹ This is not restricted to any cohort, so even the combat arms positions have the ability to direct commission.¹¹² However, most of these direct commissions will likely come from highly specialized careers which require professional degrees. Section 505 in the NDAA is another authority which adds flexibility. It authorizes officers the ability to opt out of a promotion board.¹¹³ However, an officer may only opt out of a promotion board due to the impact of an assignments deemed of significant value, and it impacts the officer's

competitiveness for promotion.¹¹⁴ Examples of this would be a broadening assignment or an officer completing advanced civil schooling.¹¹⁵ The officer can opt out of a promotion board for up to two years.¹¹⁶ This will allow officer the ability to develop themselves without risking a pass over on a promotion board because they did not have the time to meet the desired key developmental positions required for the next rank.

Flexible Career Paths-ARNG

Not all NDAA authorities are applicable to the ARNG, but it is important to point out that Congress provided the Army Secretary with the option to employ the authorities that update the military officer management laws.¹¹⁷ This reinforces the level cooperation the Army Chief of Staff is receiving from Congress to make people his number one priority. Each State should use this opportunity to make the necessary Title 32 changes that will benefit and support the Army's talent management initiative. The Guard does not follow the same up or out procedures as the Active Component, so opting out of a promotion board does not provide the same benefit or flexibility. However, it would be beneficial if an Officer had flexibility to compete or fulfill certain active duty positions while maintaining Guard status. For example, the 51A (Acquisition) Officers within the National Guard do not have the same developmental opportunities as the Active Component, and through an agreement with the Active Component they have filled positions on their Table of Distribution and Allowances (TDA). This agreement is leading to discussions of creating 51- series component immaterial positions.¹¹⁸ This benefits all by increasing the development of the Guardsman while increasing the readiness of the Active Component. This concept could be expanded outside the Acquisition community, but will need cooperation from the total force and now is the time to gain buy in, because these efforts align with current priorities and will receive the attention they deserve.

Conclusion

The Army's current Personnel system is based on concepts that were relevant over seventy years ago. However, the Army's four new talent management initiatives, under the Talent Management Framework, are driving the new personnel system to take more of an informational aged approach. The Army Talent and Alignment Process, Assessments, Promotions and Selections, and Flexible Career Paths are the initiatives which will maximize human potential and enhance total force readiness. The National Defense Strategy and the Army leadership are prioritizing these initiatives and are promoting "people" as their number one priority, which provides opportunities for the ARNG to leverage. People are the Army's greatest asset, regardless of component, and they are critical in meeting the Nation's strategic objectives in today's complex operational environment, where the Army's technological overmatch is shrinking. Every person has talent, which is defined by their KSBs, and the better the Army understands their people, the better they will be at acquiring, developing, employing, and retaining them. IPPS-A leverages technology and provides the means to a centralized talent and data driven capability which were not there before. The ARNG is leading the IPPS-A implementation efforts, but the Active Component is leading the four initiatives and, on the surface, seem to be the major benefactor. However, the initiatives provide tremendous opportunities and capability for the ARNG to increase readiness by improving trust and transparency and serves as the Army's hedge against uncertainty.¹¹⁹ Regardless of the differences between the components, it is crucial for the ARNG to invest now to maximize their full potential which rest in their people.

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