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THE OPERATIONAL FEASIBILITY OF THE LEADERSHIP EVALUATION AND ANALYSIS PROGRAM (LEAP)

Final Report

Thomas D. Affourtit.

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Prepared for:
U.S. Department of the Navy
Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps (Code: MPH)
Washington, D.C. 20380

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Leadership Evaluation and Analysis Program (LEAP) was designed to provide company level commanders with the techniques and procedure by which they may assess leadership concerns, determine the level of unit combat readiness, and evaluate the effectiveness of the decision-making process. Decision-making feedback is used to develop leadership capability since the leader learns to control and influence various groups under a variety of conditions and mission requirements.

As an organizational/management development type program, the LEAP is unique in that it utilizes a decentralized, self-development strategy. Since the entire program can be applied by the unit commander, there is no need for professional assistance to conduct the program or to interpret the results.

Although the validity of program materials has been established, it was also necessary to determine the operational feasibility of the LEAP through pilot application by Marine Corps units under actual field conditions.

A pilot evaluation study was conducted at 2nd Marine Division, FMF, to determine the operational feasibility of the LEAP in terms of the following criteria:

Applicability. Can commanders administer the program properly to ensure valid response?

Comprehensibility. Can results be interpreted sufficiently by leaders to effect appropriate corrective action?

Acceptability. Will results be beneficial enough to motivate unit commanders to continue use on a voluntary basis?

Thirteen company level commands representing a variety of mission orientations participated in the field study. Each command administered the motivational leadership survey (Interaction Inventory) component of the LEAP and received a command profile report. The report featured total command scores and criterion group analyses for rank and ethnic differentials. Additional analysis was provided on request.

Following information feedback, commanders were requested to submit an evaluation statement regarding the value of the LEAP for their purpose and to make recommendations deemed appropriate.

The consensus of judgment by participant commanders was favorable, indicating the LEAP is a viable and effective leadership aid. Verbatim statements by commanders are given in Appendix A.

Comments generally reflected the particular interests of the commander, and some recommendations were made. Several concerns also surfaced regarding the necessity of proper controls to avoid threat to unit anonymity, and to eliminate the possibility of an additional administrative burden imposed through mandatory application of the program. The importance of voluntary and anonymous application of the LEAP is stressed, and the issue concerning misuse of program material is addressed in detail in Appendix B.

Several corollary benefits derived from LEAP data are discussed, and future program developments are outlined.

CONTENTS

	Page
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	iii
BACKGROUND	1
PURPOSE	2
METHOD	3
Command Sample	3
Procedure	4
Evaluation Criteria	4
RESULTS	4
Survey Administration	5
Data Analyses and Feedback	5
Special Considerations	7
Evaluation Statements	7
DISCUSSION	8
FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS	10
Introduce the LEAP at Primary Marine Corps Installations	10
Install LEAP Computer Program Capability at Appropriate Automated Data Processing Centers	10
Establish the LEAP Network Monitor System	10
Revalidate Interaction Inventory and Develop Additional Leadership Survey Instruments	12
Establish Official Sanctions for Use and Misuse of the LEAP	13
REFERENCES	15
APPENDIX A. Statements by Commanding Officers Involved in the LEAP Pilot Evaluation Study	A-0
APPENDIX B. Response to Concern over the Misuse of LEAP Data	B-0
RECOMMENDED DISTRIBUTION LIST	32

FIGURES

	Page
1. The LEAP Network Monitor System	11

THE OPERATIONAL FEASIBILITY OF THE
LEADERSHIP EVALUATION AND
ANALYSIS PROGRAM (LEAP)

Background

In March 1975 a project was launched by Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps to develop an evaluation technique for measuring the impact of the Leadership (Human Relations) Program. To satisfy this requirement, the Leadership Evaluation and Analysis Program (LEAP) was conceptualized and approved by the Director, Manpower Plans and Policy Division.

An initial six months of support for the project provided for the foundation of the program and for the development of a preliminary evaluation instrument. The instrument was pretested and validated on a Marine Corps sample at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina in July 1975.

While awaiting further R&D support to continue the project (September 1975 to October 1976), the LEAP evolved to an entire organizational development system, extending the evaluation objective to include all aspects of Marine Corps leadership. During this period a user's manual was also completed (Affourtit, 1976).

Like other organizational/management development (OD) type programs presently being used in the Navy, Army, and Air Force (Forbes, 1976; Shaum, 1976; Hackman & Oldham, 1974), the LEAP represents a process by which unit leadership and combat readiness are evaluated, command deficiencies are identified, and the effectiveness of the decision-making process may be determined.

The LEAP, however, is distinguished from other OD processes in that it offers a decentralized, self-development strategy. The program was designed for Marine Corps use strictly at the company, battery, and squadron level. Command confidentiality is maintained since the program is self-applied and there is no need for professional assistance to administer the techniques or to interpret the results. Moreover, program application is voluntary on the leader's part, thereby eliminating report requirements and other administrative burdens.

The rationale behind the LEAP methodology is that leadership is a multidimensional phenomenon comprised of a series of unidimensional components (functions) which are determined by the population on which the program is to be applied. While other OD approaches utilize standard instruments developed for general

industrial use, the LEAP was designed for a specific military population with a unique mission orientation.

The LEAP method involves assessment of leadership based on operationally defined performance criteria and assessment of command motivation. To accomplish this, the program includes two primary techniques: the Leadership Analysis Form (LAF) which generates a measure of general and command specific performance requirements, and the Interaction Inventory which yields an assessment of command motivation. Command motivation is measured through perceptions by unit personnel of leadership concerns and issues which are associated with Marine Corps priorities and which have a direct bearing on leadership performance, the consequences of leadership.

The LEAP procedure entails a systematic inductive and deductive analytic model. That is, the two techniques are used in conjunction in an effort to measure cause and effect. Application of the program on a periodic basis enables the leader to determine the level of unit combat readiness and to evaluate the effectiveness of the decision-making process. Decision-making feedback is used to develop leadership capability since the leader learns to control and influence various groups under a variety of conditions and mission requirements. Formal leadership training programs are treated as decisions to improve leadership conditions, and are evaluated in the same manner as other leadership decisions.

The motivational assessment scales of LEAP Interaction Inventory were validated using absenteeism and other performance measures as criteria (op cit), and the entire program was pretested on a Marine Corps Reserve company with favorable results. However, if the LEAP was to be adopted by the Marine Corps, it would have to meet large scale operational standards.

In October 1976, a 4.5 month contract was given to Interaction Research Institute to establish the operational feasibility of the LEAP based on a pilot application of the program with Marine Corps units under actual field conditions.

Purpose

The purpose of this pilot study was to determine the operational feasibility of the LEAP in terms of applicability, comprehensibility, and acceptability by field commanders. In other words, if the LEAP was adequately designed as a viable, decentralized organizational development method, then Marine unit commanders with no formal background in organizational development or behavioral science fields should:

- Have no difficulty administering the program or applying the techniques properly to insure valid response,
- Be able to understand and interpret the results produced by the program sufficiently enough to take appropriate corrective action,
- Be motivated to continue use of the program on a voluntary basis, provided systems support.

Method

In an effort to satisfy the objectives of the pilot study, a strategy was designed to conduct a field test of the LEAP using a representative sample of company level commands engaged in a variety of mission-oriented activities.

Command Sample

The Commanding General, 2nd Marine Division recommended the Division as an appropriate target population for field testing the LEAP. It was anticipated that ten (10) company level commands, representing a cross-section of functional areas would participate in the pilot evaluation study. Ten commands and five alternates were initially selected. Thirteen (13) commands (approximately 15% of Division reporting units) actually participated in the field study. The sample included the following types of commands:

Communications Company (1)
 Engineer Support Company (1)
 Truck Company (1)
 Tank Company (1)
 Antitank Company (1)
 Artillery Battery (1)
 Headquarters Battery (1)
 Recon Company (1)
 H&S Recon Company (1)
 H&S Infantry Company (1)
 Infantry Company (3)

Selection was made on the basis of nature of mission, availability to participate in the entire study, and readiness status.

Procedure

The plan for field testing the LEAP was conducted according to the following three phases of operation:

Phase I. Selection and Briefing of Participant Commands. Commanding officers selected for participation were briefed regarding the LEAP, the purpose and strategy of the pilot evaluation study, and the extent of their individual participation. Commanders were informed that the data collected would be for their use only, in accordance with the rationale and intended application of the program. The LEAP Manual was provided each command, and programmed sections were recommended for review in preparation for conducting the leadership survey.

Phase II. Execution. The motivational survey component of the LEAP (Interaction Inventory) was administered by participant commands to personnel according to a prearranged schedule. Since the procedure required each command to conduct their own survey, commanding officers were advised to appoint an appropriate unit member to function as Inventory Administrator.

Phase III. Information Feedback. The results of each command survey were returned to respective commanding officers upon completion of data analyses. The forms for recording and summarizing motivational results were prepared in the manner outlined in the LEAP Manual. An information debriefing was scheduled, and additional command analysis was provided upon request.

Evaluation Criteria

Following information feedback, participant commanders were requested to submit an evaluation statement regarding the value of the LEAP for their purpose and to make any recommendations deemed appropriate.

Results

Individual command response to the pilot study was excellent. Commanding officers accepted the responsibility assigned and took a serious interest in the project. There is no greater skeptic than an already overburdened commander when it comes to another personnel type program. On the other hand, the same situation generates interest in any approach which is designed to assist commanders in dealing with personnel problems and the consequences of maintaining a constant readiness status.

Survey Administration

All commands were prepared to administer the survey, and in every case the respective CO and/or XO was present during the survey session. While styles of administration varied considerably, the purpose of the survey, the nature of the instrument, and the directions for response were understood by unit personnel. Only 0.8% of the survey Answer Forms were not accepted for tabulation due to erroneous or careless response. The low error rate also attests to the seriousness with which unit personnel responded to the survey.

Over 1100 Marines participated in the entire survey, representing from 24 to 70 percent of their respective commands. In addition, some officers and key staff NCO's decided to use the survey questionnaire to estimate subordinate response to the issues covered. This approach gave senior members an opportunity to gauge the degree to which their assumed knowledge of subordinates is supported by fact. Senior members were able to compare their judgments against unit profile results. These Answer Forms were retained for personal edification and were not included in the overall analysis.

The time required for survey administration for each command ranged from 30 to 45 minutes.

Data Analyses and Feedback

The data collected from each command were analyzed separately for total command and criterion group response. The standard information feedback provided to each commanding officer included the following sequential analyses:

a. Total command motivational profile. Inventory scale scores were given for the Command Preparedness and the Command Equality factors. These scale scores were also computed to derive the command motivational Leadership Quotient (LQ_m). Individual and combined command results were compared to scores of the total sample for reference. However, it was explained that the sample norm did not represent a realistic standard, since participant commands were selected on the basis of dissimilarity rather than similarity.

b. Total command item response summary for Command Preparedness and Command Equality items. Total group responses and scores were given for each individual item in the Command Preparedness and Command Equality scales. Command strengths and weaknesses as indicated by the relative differences between scale scores were analyzed.

c. Command motivational profile, rank breakdown.
Differences in overall scale scores between two rank groups

(SNCO/officers vs. NCO/enlisted) were provided. Relative divergence between rank groups were highlighted as an indication of overall command proficiency.

d. Item response summary for Command Preparedness items, rank breakdown. Following rank profile analysis, individual issues were studied from the standpoint of rank differential. Emphasis was placed on the level of disparity or disagreement which existed between rank groups.

e. Command motivational profile, ethnic breakdown. Scale score differences were analyzed according to overall response by ethnic minority and majority group personnel. Scale score divergence between ethnic groups signifying disagreement as well as scale score level were analyzed.

f. Item response summary for Command Equality items, ethnic breakdown. Differential perception of specific discrimination, justice, and intergroup tension issues were analyzed according to ethnic group response. Ethnic disparity was presented as an indication of potential confrontation.

g. General attitude responses, total command and ethnic breakdown. Responses to general attitude statements included in the Inventory (community relations, ethnic alliance, pride, and affiliation) were analyzed for appropriate groups to provide further interpretive meaning to perceptions of command conditions.

h. Additional analysis. Several commands requested additional analysis of the data for more definitive interpretation. These included such criteria as: time in unit, MOS breakdown, and career orientation.

While the primary mission of the LEAP is to provide small unit leaders with an intelligence gathering process, the data produced by the pilot study was fruitful from an overall organizational development standpoint. The collective results provide a rich source of information for command policy decisions at higher levels and for determining combat readiness/effectiveness on a large scale. The overall results were analyzed and published under separate cover as an adjunct to this report (Affourtit, 1977). In accordance with the design of the LEAP for individual command confidentiality, no unit is identified in the total analysis.

In addition to the standard LEAP feedback, commanding officers were returned all survey Answer Forms. The forms were designed to allow Marines to qualify their response or expand on any issue covered by the survey. Further, Marines were urged to comment on any other condition or issue considered relevant to the command. When such comments were encouraged by Inventory Administrators,

replies were extensive and meaningful to the command. The adjunct report (op cit) includes a selected sample of such comments covering a variety of topics.

Special Considerations

Due to the time limitation imposed by the contract, it was not possible to conduct a complete application of the LEAP as originally intended. The primary function of the program involves leadership development through decision-making feedback. That is, command conditions and critical issues are identified by initial application of program techniques. These conditions represent the basis for corrective procedures, and a reassessment conducted at an appropriate time determines the effectiveness of corrective action. However, it was felt that a one-time motivational survey was sufficient for commanders to judge the overall value of the program.

The logistics involved in scheduling entire units at one time and place for command survey represented a major problem during the execution phase of the study. Total command survey participation was restricted by building assignment and by allotted time periods of survey administration for each command.

The time spent with commanders for information feedback was also restricted by scheduling. In some cases the commanding officer was not available for the debriefing due to training commitments or changes of command. Therefore, information had to be transmitted through an intermediary or by mail. This condition interfered with a meaningful dialogue and exchange of information concerning obtained results.

Evaluation Statements

Commanding officers were requested to evaluate the LEAP according to their own interests and to indicate if the results justified further application. No other guidance was given regarding the nature and content of evaluation statements. Verbatim statements by participant commanders are given in Appendix A.

The consensus of judgment by commanders was favorable, indicating that the LEAP is viable and effective as a leadership aid. In general, the officers felt that the survey information was beneficial in identifying leadership problems before serious manifestation, and in some cases, the results corroborated the commanders' own judgments of command condition. In addition, many of the officers stated that unit personnel response to the survey was very positive.

Comments generally reflected the particular interests of the commander. Some officers recommended more emphasis on certain

leadership aspects or expansion of the survey instrument to include additional areas of leadership. Others suggested a deemphasis of those issues which did not seem critical to their unit. Many recommendations concerned the necessity for a resurvey of the unit to determine the outcome of decisions which are made to overcome leadership concerns.

Some apprehension regarding LEAP application also surfaced, the most prominent of which focused on the fear that the LEAP may become formalized and made mandatory, thereby presenting an additional administrative burden similar to other required personnel programs. Another primary concern mentioned involved the use of LEAP results by senior commanders to judge subordinate leadership capability. The topic of use and misuse of the LEAP requires a detailed explanation and the issue is covered fully in Appendix B.

Since the concern over the misuse of the LEAP represents an imagined rather than a real problem, overall results of the pilot evaluation study were considered positive. The LEAP was deemed operationally feasible and the program was recommended for further field application.

Discussion

As an organizational/management development type program, the LEAP deals with realistic Marine Corps concerns, practical unit problems, and concrete solutions. The program provides the commander with a quick reaction capability for identifying and solving personnel performance and motivational leadership concerns. As a result, the leader develops group, task, and situational flexibility.

The future of the entire program rested on the success of a 4.5 month pilot evaluation study to determine operational feasibility. The results revealed that company level commanders can effectively administer the LEAP and can utilize the results to identify critical leadership issues, thereby gaining more control and influence over their commands. Most important, commanders generally indicated willingness to continue using the program on a voluntary basis in an effort to promote better unit leadership.

Adoption of the LEAP by the Marine Corps provides many corollary benefits which extend beyond the primary function of information gathering and decision-making evaluation.

For example, application of the survey portion of the program signals unit personnel that the commanding officer is interested in their concerns and creates an informal and anonymous dialogue

between leaders and followers. Personnel concerns and critical command issues are communicated before serious manifestation and without direct confrontation, in a manner which maintains the authority relationship necessary for proper military functioning. Therefore, the vehicle is provided for assuring that Marine Corps policies and individual rights are not violated, at the same time avoiding the erosion of command hierarchy which may result from formal unionization of the military.

The information produced by unit surveys also provides realistic and relevant content for leadership discussion programs. No single discussion program of general topics can cover the variety of factors which interplay to create the unique condition of a single command. The results of the LEAP eliminate the need for static and contrived leadership discussion material, since commanders can tailor their own program to meet the particular needs of the unit. Moreover, the leader is able to acquire the facts about critical unit issues prior to topic interchange in preparation for dealing with volatile concerns which may arise during discussion.

Large scale, centrally organized survey methods used to produce general discussion topics may no longer be necessary. The commander's authority need not be usurped by centrally oriented surveys which are not only expensive and disruptive of command functions, but which may lack credibility due to the response bias produced by the absence of anonymity. Credibility is gained when enforced compliance is avoided and leaders are persuaded, through direct and expeditious personal benefit, to invest their time and effort in a personnel program.

The rationale behind the LEAP is that leadership responsibility, like achievement, is acquired, not merely delegated. By providing the equipment for self-development which proves profitable to the leader according to his or her own situation, voluntary implementation will be a consequence. The administrative burden and rigidity imposed by a mandatory program is thus removed.

The LEAP strategy represents a persuasive rather than a dogmatic approach. The decision to retain the anonymous and voluntary nature of the program therefore must be affirmed. Misuse of the LEAP data would not only be in violation of a Marine Corps directive and a National statute (Privacy Act), but the validity of cross-unit comparisons is precluded, due to differences in unit composition, mission, and situation. Forced comparisons beyond the level for which the program is designed would also generate data of dubious value, since the desire to present a positive command image may supercede any interest in accurately recording problem areas.

Furthermore, the primary objective of the LEAP is to provide company level commanders with an aid to lighten the leadership

burden, not to increase it. Formalized mandatory application would contradict the purpose and destroy the basic value of the program. Flexibility of application on the part of the commanding officer is essential for useful and valid data return.

The LEAP has been built gradually with a strong foundation being established and with careful planning by all those involved in supporting and introducing the program to the Marine Corps. This effort has been justified by the success of the initial field test.

Future Developments

Several tasks are planned for the second phase of LEAP implementation. The tasks described below represent a 10.5 month project scheduled for completion in January 1978.

Introduce the LEAP to Commands at Primary Marine Corps Installations

Company, battery, and squadron commanders at designated installations will be briefed regarding the application and function of the LEAP. Advisory assistance will be provided for administration of the program including response to inquiries about research design and special unit conditions. In addition, a user's manual with programmed instructions for administering the LEAP will be provided to all reporting units.

Install LEAP Computer Program Capability at Appropriate Automated Data Processing Centers

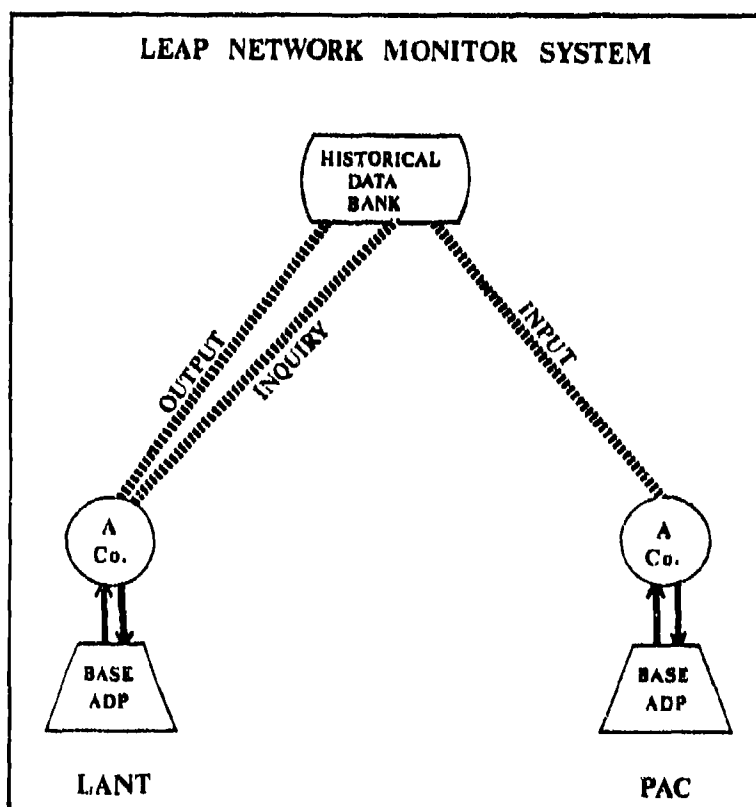
The most efficient and economical approach toward processing LEAP questionnaire data involves the use of available computer services. During visits to primary installations, computer program capability will be installed at base automated service centers for access by all commands. A procedure will also be established for providing assistance to satellite installations with no available data processing centers. A two-day turnaround time for processing command data is anticipated.

Establish the LEAP Network Monitor System

When dealing with complex leadership issues at the small unit level, there are no easy answers, and solutions usually require a collective effort. Therefore, the major drawback with a decentralized, self-development program such as the LEAP is the absence of storage and communication capability between commands utilizing the program.

To overcome this deficiency the Network Monitor System (NMS) has been conceptualized to function as an information storage and retrieval data bank. The NMS is a contingency for overcoming the problem of cross-communication between commands while maintaining unit anonymity. Figure 1 shows an example of how the NMS will operate.

Figure 1



Input data will be recorded in the form of results obtained and solutions discovered by unit commanders. The output will be given in terms of decision probability for direct Inquiries which outline problems encountered in the field in consideration of unit composition, location, mission, and situation.

For example, in Figure 1 the commander of Co. A in WESTPAC encounters problem (X) and counteracts with decisions (A), (B), and (C) to correct the situation. He discovers decision (B) to effect the best solution and communicates the results to the data bank.

Co. A commander in LANT encounters the same problem and queries the bank for a recommended course of action. The bank, in consideration of the mission, composition, and situation provides Co. A LANT with the probability of success of various solutions to the problem, based on actual or empirical results.

In this manner, an historical record of cause and effect is maintained, and unit commanders have a common source of reference to share solutions to common leadership problems. Information may be requested directly from the NMS file, or provided through periodic publication outlining issues uncovered, results of various counter-action measures, solutions discovered, and findings of research and evaluation projects. Command confidentiality can be maintained through newsletter response to anonymous inquiries.

The NMS will also provide information on a large scale for policy decisions at higher levels of command to influence conditions beyond the control of company level commanders.

Finally, the system can be used as a training model at formal schools to give Marine officers an opportunity to respond to actual personnel situations and receive the decision-making feedback experience prior to command assignment. The model will operate similar to the tactical decision-theory systems now in operational use in the Corps.

Revalidate Interaction Inventory and Develop Additional Leadership Survey Instruments

In the normal course of events, many of the conditions which represent a particular leadership domain may vary with changes in National emphasis, historical conditions, or population patterns. Therefore, in order to assure currency of a motivational assessment instrument, it is necessary to revalidate the scales through continuous factor analyses procedures. This process updates the instrument and avoids concentration on obsolete issues or on those conditions which have been satisfactorily resolved by policy modifications.

Moreover, in response to recommendations calling for emphasis on unique command conditions and on specific leadership issues, additional survey scales will be developed based on empirical findings, particular needs of commanders, and on responses by unit personnel. Additional scales will function as an adjunct to the present Interaction Inventory and will be used to explore various contemporary aspects of command leadership motivation and organizational development. The commanding officer will have the latitude to investigate those issues considered most appropriate for his unit.

The overall purpose of this task is to keep current material for continued measurement of prevailing leadership issues, while providing contingencies for the examination of temporal trends and emergent issues.

Establish Official Sanctions for the Use and Misuse of the LEAP

The importance of maintaining the anonymous and voluntary strategy of the LEAP is recognized by Marine Corps officials responsible for promulgating doctrine regarding application of the program. Misuse would benefit no one; proper application would provide leadership support and information hitherto unavailable. Therefore, official standards of LEAP administration will be specifically outlined by CMC and disseminated to all commanders prior to program implementation.

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APPENDIX A

Statements by Commanding Officers
Involved in the LEAP Pilot Study

Statements by Commanding Officers
Involved in the LEAP Pilot Study

The following statements by commanding officers involved in the LEAP pilot study were officially recorded and judged collectively as supporting further implementation of the program. Commanding officers were requested to evaluate the program according to their own interests, and to determine if results justified further application. No other guidance was given regarding the nature and content of statements.

In consideration of the confidential nature of these statements, no names or command designations will be presented here.

Major, USMC:

1. Having been a Commanding Officer for the past 31 months of an OCS Company, Separate Company, FMF, and at [REDACTED] Company, FMF, I have experienced a lot of different leadership problems in my commands. I have often searched for a tool or vehicle to find out where the emphasis should be put. I even conducted my own local survey in [REDACTED] as related to morale, etc. I feel very strongly that LEAP is an outstanding means easily available to a Company Commander to get this data from his troops. Properly timed and administered this could be a definite asset to commanders in these fluid times.

2. I hope we adopt this program as I think it will help us cut off a lot of problems "at the pass."

Major, USMC:

1. The LEAP questionnaire has been presented to members of this command by Mr. Thomas D. AFFOURTIT. Mr. AFFOURTIT has presented the results of the analysis to me and has explained how they can be interpreted best.

2. An initial review of the results indicated that the analysis should be of use to me as a Commander. My troops responded to the analysis with enthusiasm and numerous comments were provided about how they feel about our Company.

3. Mr. AFFOURTIT has been cooperative and helpful during this analysis and I feel he genuinely hopes that the LEAP can be of assistance to the Marine Corps in the future.

Major, USMCR:

I believe in what you are trying to accomplish. I like your program. It was very well received by the participants. The results of the first survey give us a benchmark with which to compare our progress in the areas of command preparedness, command equality, etc. They also show us, specifically, the areas needing our attention. We look forward to administering the Inventory again, in the near future. Thank you.

Captain, USMC:

1. On 15 Nov 1976 a LEAP Interaction Inventory was conducted involving [REDACTED] Battery. The results were briefed to me on 12 Jan 1977. The system appears to be extremely effective as a leadership tool. The analysis of my unit appeared to be fairly close to actual circumstances involving leadership areas.

2. The system can only be truly evaluated with another inventory so that a comparison can be made between the two inventories. It would also allow the unit to see if any improvement was made in certain areas due to the first inventory.

3. It would be my recommendation that the system be further evaluated with at least one more inventory conducted on each participating unit.

Captain, USMC:

1. I strongly agree with the Leadership Evaluation and Analysis Program (LEAP) for identifying and correcting leadership problems at the Company level.

2. Decision Feedback is essential. Comparison of results is the only useful way to apply the program. One time evaluation of command leadership is not as useful.

3. Anonymity must be stressed when using the program. Once a leadership problem is identified through the LEAP, the commanding officer must be allowed the latitude to rectify the situation.

4. I recommend that the commanding officer have the authority to take the results of the LEAP survey up the chain of command so that higher echelon can analyze the similarities between units for broader policy decisions. This can be accomplished by company level commanders comparing results and collectively making recommendations.

5. I strongly recommend that a similar survey questionnaire be applied to unit leaders at various levels such as company and battalion commanders. This approach would provide a group response to the Division commanders to determine trends in the Marine Corps.

Captain, USMC:

1. On 16 November 1976, this unit participated in the evaluation of the LEAP program under consideration by the Marine Corps for implementation.

2. Subsequent contacts with Mr. AFFOURTIT and his explanation of administration of the program led me to request two additional breakdowns and compilation of the data he received.

3. These data when returned were fantastic; not only did they corroborate my own feelings on a number of problem areas, they also helped pinpoint the exact location and indicated the most probable areas.

4. It is my own personal feeling that this program, as presented, is an extremely versatile and marvelously efficient tool, and could be of inestimable benefit to the Marine Corps in general and to any Company Commander in specific.

Captain, USMC:

1. Our command took part in the LEAP program during November 1976 and received feedback information in January 1977. I feel that the program will be beneficial to myself and other leaders of the command in correcting areas we feel we need work on.

2. I think the program is simple enough to be effectively used on a company level and I intend to use the inventory in the future to gauge the effectiveness of some of our new programs and policies.

Captain, USMC:

1. The program is founded on a valid premise, however the Interaction Inventory appears to be racial in orientation as opposed to leadership. An inordinate number of questions, regardless of positive or negative phrasing connoted race or racial affiliation.

2. The statistical data provided by the survey will give this unit a reference point to gauge its "command performance." Follow-on surveys will provide the yardstick. In that the program

is designed to aid and provide unit commanders a tool with which to base interunit training and education programs, no one survey can be generated to provide a norm for all units.

3. Problems encountered and their solutions can be categorized and made available to commanders experiencing a similar problem area as a possible solution.

4. Recommendations. Reorient the survey to leadership devoid of racial overtones and consistent with Marine Corps leadership policies.

Captain, USMC:

1. The Leadership Evaluation and Analysis Program is a highly regarded tool usable toward the improvement of the leadership in this and any command. It is of immeasurable service to the commanding officer of any unit; and the indicators are applicable and serviceable even at the section/platoon level in showing the strong and weak characteristics of the leadership provided.

2. This program allows the Marine to be quite candid in his personal evaluation and observation of the effectiveness, fairness and credibility of his superiors. LEAP is designed to allow for the introduction of new survey areas into each interaction inventory, thereby providing indicators on any given phase of leadership, which would suggest the specific improvements which would or should be implemented.

3. It is believed that this program, if properly implemented, could supercede many of the present programs used by the Marine Corps to accomplish much the same goals. Specifically, the Marine Corps Human Relations Program, though having noble intentions, deals almost exclusively with racial interaction. This program could also eliminate other recurring reports on such areas as unauthorized absence, disciplinary action, drug and alcohol abuse, and perhaps even career planning and education reports. This would reduce greatly the amount of paperwork and lost man-hours caused by these various reports of statistical data.

4. Enclosure (1) is submitted as requested.

Captain, USMC:

1. This command participated in the LEAP on 18 November 1976, with approximately 60% of the chargeable strength on board. Results of the analysis were provided to this command during the second week of January, 1977. The following general comments are provided:

a. The overall program is worthwhile and should be retained. Modifications are needed, however.

b. Use of the Interaction Inventory will be of the most interest and use to individual Commanding Officers. However, to get the most out of the results of the inventory, it will be necessary to become intimately familiar with the various forms, computations, procedures, and interrelationships between categories.

c. The value of the Leadership Analysis Forms (LAF) #1 and #2 is questionable. Information is readily available and should be well known to each Commanding Officer. Absence of standardized "acceptable" weighting systems (agreeable to all CO's) for both inter- and intra-category scores renders the resulting numbers quite useless for any purpose other than the most basic period-to-period comparisons. The urge to compare resulting numbers (scores) between units is overwhelming and possibly quite misleading. The threat of higher command level comparisons between subordinate commands is real and cannot be forgotten.

Captain, USMC:

1. The survey was informative and has some potential value.

2. However, there are numerous and vastly more important areas in which funding could be used. I feel the LEAP program rates rather low on priorities.

Captain, USMC:

1. On 17 November 1976, 77 Marines of this company were administered the LEAP Interaction Inventory. The number of Marines participating represented 50.6% of the company's on hand strength.

2. On 14 January 1977, the results of the inventory were returned along with a debrief. Further review of the inventory results have lead to the following conclusions:

a. LEAP offers an interesting means with which a commander may obtain some insight into the needs of his command and the effectiveness of his programs.

b. In reviewing the results of the LEAP inventory it is felt that some efforts need to be made to render the results more discernible. A suggestion would be to report results graphically viz., in percentiles. Additionally, although it is recognized that the goal of this program is not to compete units with one another, establishment of norms would be beneficial in interpreting performance.

c. In general, it is felt that while LEAP does provide some interesting information, the value of such a program on a continuing basis, funded by HQMC, is questionable. This conclusion is based on the belief that as a tool of the small unit commander, LEAP should not tell him anything he doesn't already know. At the same time, directed for use/monitored at the Battalion, Regiment or Division level, LEAP has the potential of increasing the administrative burden/down time of the small unit.

3. In summary, while LEAP offers some interesting possibilities, its overall value is considered questionable.

Captain, USMC:

1. It is my opinion that LEAP may be a valuable tool to a unit commander like myself as he goes about the business of determining what the morale, discipline, proficiency and esprit de Corps of his unit is. In my case it confirmed my suspicions on several subjects; unfortunately, there has been little that I have been able or clever enough to do to correct problems identified by the results of the inventory.

I refer to the fact that I am in a unit that is about to deploy to "the Med."; therefore, I have little control over how my unit is employed. Additionally, as you well know an [redacted] company is, by its very nature, a fragmented unit with loyalties spread among sections rather than the company itself.

My point is this; you have assured me to some degree that the results of any questionnaire will not be used by higher headquarters to evaluate a subordinate commander. I still fear that the program could at some future time be changed, and it would be used as a form of evaluation of company commanders. At one time in my career as a Marine I was a drill instructor. My experience in that job was that drill instructors were evaluated largely on the numerical percentage produced by their platoons during final events. Of course that should be a part of the evaluation--a large part--but the "whole man" concept was not used. The result, in my opinion, was widespread cheating and other improper actions on the part of drill instructors to produce the "right" numbers. My experience in that situation may have made me a little paranoid about some forms of evaluation, but that is why I am suspicious.

2. I also think that many unit commanders in FMF units are going to be so busy just trying to meet their many commitments that they are not going to be enthusiastic about one more thing to accomplish. To me that means that if LEAP is adopted it will ultimately be forced on us to justify its presence. If it turns out I am correct, LEAP will be received with hostility. My thinking may

be regarded as primitive by those Marines who are not in the trenches, and it may not be shared by other Marines who are not as far removed from my situation as those at HQMC, but that is how I feel.

3. I will attempt to summarize. I can see positive aspects to LEAP, but I can also see potential for abuse. I also see potential for misunderstanding among all Marines about what is intended to be accomplished.

Junior Marines will expect rapid change after a LEAP inventory (maybe that is good), but if that change can't happen because of unit commitments or other circumstances beyond the control of a company commander, LEAP will be perceived as just so much bull on the part of the troops.

4. I am not enthusiastic about LEAP. I believe we can accomplish what we must accomplish without it.

Captain, USMC:

1. The LEAP appears to be useful as a management tool as long as it is used by the CO of the unit screened.

2. I would like to have a second survey conducted to see how it measures change. The one time survey was good, but change in perceptions were not, of course, reflected.

3. A faster return on the results would be better. The troops and officers wanted to see the results right away.

4. In summary, I am enthusiastic about the LEAP as long as it is not used by higher authority to measure units against each other.

APPENDIX B

RESPONSE TO CONCERN OVER THE
MISUSE OF LEAP DATA

Response to the Concern Over the Misuse of LEAP Data

The issue of data availability and potential misuse of the LEAP has been a common concern of Marine officers when introduced to the program. This issue is addressed extensively here in an effort to allay such anxiety and to avoid future controversy.

Performance Measures

With regard to the LEAP performance measures, the Leadership Analysis Form (LAF) was designed as an internal management technique which provides the company level commander with one approach toward systematizing performance data for the purpose of tracking significant trends over periods and during situational changes. Several performance categories are provided in the LEAP Manual for consideration, the use of which depends on the unit commander's inclination. As an internal management technique, the LAF offers several options which may be disregarded or improved upon by the commander. Critical indices may be emphasized, individual performance categories may be considered equal or weighted accordingly, or a number of performance categories may be tabulated together producing an aggregate score to facilitate comparison over time. For example, a commander may decide to analyze UA's according to type or nature (absent from area, late for muster, or missing from duty assignment). Predominance of one type or a fluctuation in number during situational changes gives the leader additional insight into a problem with which to seek more viable solutions.

The LAF was designed for flexibility of application to meet specific unit demands. As such, singular or aggregate scores have no comparative validity across commands, again due to varying unit conditions, composition, duty commitments, etc., as well as the generic differences which make up an aggregate or summary score. As pointed out in the LEAP Manual, it is virtually impossible to determine the importance of one ethnic incident against a number of UA's or drug abuses, for example.

All the performance categories recommended as LAF indices (UA/desertion, disciplinary action, drug/alcohol abuse, marksmanship, etc.) are presently tabulated and available to senior officers in the form of daily, weekly, or monthly reports and recorded at battalion, regiment, and division level. Leadership in the Marine Corps has traditionally been judged on the basis of command performance. Tabulation and recording of performance statistics therefore represents no alteration in Marine Corps policy. Senior officers also consider the many individual factors which influence command performance, such as varying commitments, periods of deployment,

individual mission requirements, command composition, etc. Leadership then is judged, and fitness report entries are made on the basis of collective or aggregate performance measures, subjectively or objectively derived, with emphasis on one type of performance, or in consideration of specific indices weighted according to level of importance. Which criterion is used in the prerogative of the senior officer.

The LAF therefore produces information which is not different from what is already known and its use is optional since the program is not mandatory.

Motivational Measures

The second component of the LEAP, the Interaction Inventory, was developed as a motivational measuring instrument which provides some insight into the particular conditions which may influence command performance. Like the LAF, its purpose as an information or intelligence-gathering device is to systematically identify areas of concern which can be used by the unit commander to define goals and objectives aimed at improving performance. Whether or not the information produced by the Inventory represents a threat to company commanders must be considered in light of a realistic context, and the value of the information gained must be weighed against any potential drawback.

First, the primary concern of any senior officer must be with the combat readiness and effectiveness of a unit in terms of performance evaluation. Emphasis on the collective satisfaction of a command in lieu of performance would cast doubt on the judgment as well as the competence of a senior officer. Further, administration and response to the questionnaire by personnel is, by law, voluntary and confidential. Release of such information once obtained at one level is governed by the Privacy Act. It is unlikely that a senior officer would jeopardize his career by disregarding a Marine Corps directive and a National statute in order to obtain such information just for the purpose of considering perceptual data over unit performance.

The Marine Corps has always been tolerant of differing styles of leadership as long as the job is accomplished and the rights accorded personnel are not violated. Some leaders stress more centralized control, an autocratic leadership/management approach, while others emphasize subunit autonomy and participatory decision-making. Marine Corps leaders must, to some degree, adapt their style according to the group, the situation, and the mission. Which style of approach is best, given the character of the leader interacting with all the other variables, can only be measured pragmatically in terms of performance or objective combat readiness data.

Regardless of individual leadership style, information concerning personnel perceptions can be beneficial to a leader in understanding, controlling, and influencing the command. Leaders are required in principle to know their personnel. Whether they obtain such knowledge intuitively, receive information from SNCO's, listen to those whose judgment seems sound, personally interview each Marine in the command, or administer a motivational questionnaire is the prerogative of the leader. The LEAP Interaction Inventory is only one approach which can be used to elicit consensus or subgroup judgment to a number of command-related motivational issues. The instrument may be used on a regular basis as a temporal gauge or to augment other information-gathering methods.

Marines have traditionally been permitted and encouraged to voice their opinion about conditions in an informal and formal manner (e.g., I.G. and request mast). The Interaction Inventory gives the leader an option to ascertain the collective impression of unit personnel and to investigate a condition informally before it reaches critical proportions. The instrument can be used as a gauge to track motivational factors and determine particular trends which lead to good or poor performance. Used properly, the questionnaire can also identify causes for differences in subunit performance. For example, the commander may desire to analyze more specifically some of the intrinsic reasons for UA rates within various duty sections. The leader can also track new arrivals to the command to determine the nature of any motivational change over time in the unit in an effort to influence those conditions which produce the change. Determination of differences between rank and ethnic group as a measure of unit disparity is also possible.

Insofar as cross-comparison of survey results is concerned, such an analysis would lose meaning as well as validity for the reasons already cited above under Performance Measures. The instrument was designed solely to facilitate internal management and decision-making in rapidly changing environments and under diverse conditions at the company, battery, and squadron level.

Finally, the LEAP method is not a novel approach. There are presently available a number of organizational development-type programs featuring variations in survey technique for use in large industrial settings, governmental organizations, and small unit operations. There are no restrictions against the use by commanders at any level of any program in the management/OD inventory. The LEAP Interaction Inventory is one method available to Marine officers which offers Marine Corps standards and which is based on Marine Corps issues in the language by which Marines usually communicate. Like other OD programs available, the LEAP survey is a practical way of establishing leadership/management objectives.

Inventory Topics

Another concern voiced by some commanders pertained to the possibility that the issues covered by the questionnaire may stimulate a reaction by Marines, producing a situation which is otherwise dormant. The particular concern was over ethnic issues about which the Marine Corps has experienced considerable difficulty in the past. This same question has been raised previously with similar programs, and there are scores of studies indicating that a negative reaction is not the case. If a questionnaire item can trigger an incident, then the situation is volatile enough to be set off by any number of stimuli, such as a newspaper article, a movie, or a similar statement made by any member of the unit. The same concern can be made for leadership/human relations discussion meetings. In fact, anonymous questionnaire response may be less provocative than direct group confrontation. The information gained by Inventory responses allows the commander to verify the authenticity of a perceived condition and to acquire the facts before confronting the unit. Group discussion meetings can be conducted with more assurance when vital issues are identified and prepared for.

The survey method usually functions as a release for those who harbor resentment and wish to express their feelings in the hope that something can be done to clarify or correct the situation. The information derived also functions as a warning signal which enables the leader to predict and intervene to avoid a potential reaction such as an ethnic confrontation. This method is an alternative to management by crisis, a condition which relegates leadership to reparations and excuse-making.

Summary

In summary, in response to the concern that the LEAP may become a threat to the company grade officer, the program does not offer any information on combat readiness which is not already available; survey results have no comparative validity above the company level; and the procedure merely provides a collective measure of personnel concerns, different from usual options only in method. The purpose of the program is to provide an aid to the company grade officer which makes minimal demands on his time and offers him information which can be translated into solutions, thereby justifying the time and effort expended to apply the program.

The issue regarding the LEAP is strictly pragmatic. There are no theoretical or philosophical concepts to accept or arbitrate, only practical questions concerning whether or not the program works in a realistic situation and whether the program is cost-effective in terms of the time, effort, and expense involved. If the Marine Corps adopts and further supports the program, it will be because company grade officers find the method useful. It is in the best interest of the developer to provide the Marine Corps with an effective program and to be open to all criticisms and suggestions for improvement or modification.