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PLATOON LEADER
PERFORMANCE
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PLATOON LEADER PERFORMANCE OF USMA GRADUATES

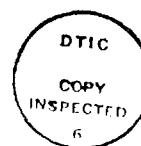
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 Prepared by: Dr. Richard P. Butler
 Typist : Carol A. Durham
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ABSTRACT

This study assessed the platoon leader performance of recent USMA, ROTC, and OCS graduates on 24 attributes judged vital to junior officer performance. Perceptions of platoon leader performance were obtained from subordinates (platoon sergeants) and superiors (company and battalion commanders) by means of a mailed survey. Results indicated that platoon leaders from all three sources of commissioning were rated well, and that USMA graduates were in a favorable position on most of the attributes. It was also found that the strongest and weakest rated attributes for USMA graduates were similar to those identified in a 1977 study.

Note: Any conclusions in this report are not to be construed as official U.S. Military Academy or Department of the Army positions unless designated by other authorized documents.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	iii
INTRODUCTION	1
Background	1
Purpose of Report	1
METHODOLOGY	2
Data Collection and Questionnaire Development	2
RESULTS	2
Battalion Commander Ratings	3
Table 1 - Battalion Commander Mean Ratings of Platoon Leaders	4
Company Commander Ratings	5
Table 2 - Company Commander Mean Ratings of Platoon Leaders	6
Platoon Sergeant Ratings	7
Importance of Attributes for Platoon Leaders	7
Table 3 - Platoon Sergeant Mean Ratings of Platoon Leaders	8
Table 4 - Importance of Attributes	9
Comparisons of 1977 and 1987 Survey Results	10
Open-Ended Question Results	10
Table 5 - Rankings of USMA Platoon Leaders In 1977 and 1987	11
DISCUSSION	12
SUMMARY OBSERVATIONS	13
CONCLUSION	14
REFERENCES	14
APPENDIX A	A-1 - A-4
APPENDIX B	B-1 - B-4
APPENDIX C	C-1
APPENDIX D	D-1
DOCUMENTATION PAGE	15

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

I. PURPOSE. To assess the platoon leader performance of recent USMA, ROTC, and OCS graduates by replicating the major elements of a survey conducted by the West Point Study Group in 1977.

II. METHODOLOGY. A survey focusing on 24 attributes of platoon leader performance and modified slightly from one used in 1977 was mailed to company and battalion commanders and platoon sergeants primarily in combat arms branches throughout the Army. The Assistant Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel served as the neutral sponsor of the survey and signed the cover letter. Respondents rated platoon leaders from each source of commissioning on a scale ranging from 1 (Outstanding) to 5 (Unsatisfactory). Responses were received from 267 (70%) of the 382 battalion commanders surveyed, 419 (57%) of the 735 company commanders and 107 (33%) of the 323 platoon sergeants. The response rates are typical for surveys of this type. Analysis of the results focused on the performance of platoon leaders who graduated from USMA, with ROTC and OCS graduates serving as comparisons. To avoid commander bias in favor of their own source of commissioning, analysis emphasized commanders from a given source rating only platoon leaders from the other two sources.

III. RESULTS.

A. Commanders and platoon sergeants rated platoon leaders from all three sources of commissioning toward the favorable end of the scale on all 24 attributes investigated.

B. Commanders and platoon sergeants rated platoon leaders from USMA more favorably than platoon leaders from ROTC and OCS on most of the attributes.

C. Considering only USMA graduated platoon leaders, the seven strongest and seven weakest rated attributes as judged by OCS and ROTC graduated battalion commanders were:

<u>Strongest Rated Attributes</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Weakest Rated Attributes</u>	<u>Rank</u>
Sense of integrity	1	Ability to talk with troops	24
Physical fitness	2	Developing subordinates	23
Bearing and appearance	3	Specific job knowledge	22
Strength of character	4	Specific job skills	21
Potential for advancement	5	Maturity	20
Intelligence	6	Concern for welfare of troop	19
Devotion to duty	7	Resourcefulness	18

D. USMA graduated battalion commanders, company commanders from all three sources of commissioning, and platoon sergeants produced similar lists to those above, indicating consistency across rater groups.

E. Most of the strongest and weakest rated attributes for USMA graduates were among the strongest and weakest rated attributes for ROTC and OCS graduated platoon leaders, indicating that there is a general hierarchy of attributes regardless of source of commission.

F. Battalion and company commanders rankings comparing USMA, ROTC, and OCS commissioned platoon leaders on the attributes were similar to the findings of the 1977 study. The attributes listed below were USMA graduated platoon leaders' strongest and weakest attributes compared to ROTC and OCS graduated platoon leaders in both 1977 and 1987:

<u>Strongest Attributes</u>	<u>Weakest Attributes</u>
Sense of integrity	Ability to talk with troops
Physical fitness	Specific job knowledge
Strength of character	Specific job skills
Potential for advancement	Maturity
Understanding the role of officers in the Army	Concern for welfare of troops

G. Platoon sergeants ranked USMA commissioned platoon leaders first (as compared with ROTC and OCS graduates) on all but one of the attributes -- ability to talk with troops. This is a positive change for USMA graduates since 1977, when platoon sergeants ranked USMA graduates either second or tied for first or second on seven attributes.

IV. Conclusion.

USMA should continue programs designed to improve cadet ability to talk with and manifest concern for troops, to develop maturity, to acquire specific job knowledge and job skills, and to develop their subordinates.

Platoon Leader Performance of USMA Graduates

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Background.

1. In January 1977 the Chief of Staff of the Army formed the West Point Study Group and charged it to examine all aspects of the Military Academy. Over the next seven months, the Study Group probed relevant aspects of the Academy and its contribution to the Army (Dickinson, Mackmull, and Merritt, 1977).

2. One line of investigation for the Study Group concerned the performance of USMA graduates as platoon leaders. Questionnaires were administered throughout the Army to company and battalion commanders and NCO's to ascertain perceptions of the performance of platoon leaders commissioned from USMA, and as a comparison, ROTC and OCS. Results indicated that commanders and noncommissioned officers ranked recent USMA graduates ahead of their ROTC and OCS counterparts in:

- Sense of integrity
- Physical fitness
- Strength of character
- Potential for advancement
- Understanding the role of an officer

3. On the other hand, the respondents considered the USMA graduates of that time to be weakest in:

- Ability to talk with troops
- Specific job knowledge
- Specific job skills
- Maturity
- Concern for the welfare of troops

4. Since 1977 USMA has implemented a number of changes designed to alleviate the above shortcomings. For example, in order to help cadets understand and become sensitized to troops and NCOs, the Drill Cadet Program was instituted, and 12 NCO's were assigned at the battalion level within USCC, 4 at the regimental level, and 4 in administrative positions.

5. In September 1986, the Superintendent of the Military Academy (LTG Palmer) tasked the Office of Institutional Research to provide an update on USMA graduate platoon leader performance by replicating the major elements of the West Point Study Group Survey.

B. Purpose of Report. To present findings concerning the strengths and weaknesses of recent USMA, ROTC and OCS graduates who are serving as platoon leaders.

II. METHODOLOGY

Data Collection and Questionnaire Development.

1. Replicating the West Point Study Group, questionnaires were mailed during the Spring of 1987 to company and battalion commanders and platoon sergeants throughout the Army. The questionnaires were mailed from and returned to the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel, which served as the neutral sponsor for the survey. MG John S. Crosby (ADCSPER) signed the cover letter.*

2. A total of 1500 questionnaires were mailed to combat arms battalion and company commanders and platoon sergeants. The response rates were typical for surveys of this type and were as follows:

	<u>A</u> Estimated # In Army (Combat Arms)	<u>B</u> # of Surveys Mailed	<u>C</u> # Returned As Non- deliverable	<u>D</u> Revised # Mailed (B - C)	<u>E</u> Completed Question- naires Received	<u>F</u> Response Rate (E ÷ D)
Bn Cdrs	500	401	19	382	267	70%
Co Cdrs	2,500	773	38	735	419	57%
Plt Sgts	7,500	326	3	323	107	33%

3. The commanders' questionnaire is at Appendix A. Items 9-32 comprised the focus of the entire study. Items 9-27 are identical to questions asked in 1977, thus allowing for replication and inferences regarding the impact of changes made at USMA over the last 10 years. Items 28-32 were added to those asked in 1977 because they are relevant to effective platoon leader functioning.

4. The primary difference between the 1977 and 1987 questionnaires was that the 1977 instructions required respondents to rank USMA, ROTC, and OCS graduates from first to third on each of the attributes, whereas the 1987 instructions asked respondents to rate the graduates using a six-point scale ranging from 1 (Outstanding) to 5 (Unsatisfactory), with 6 being "No opportunity to observe." The change made in 1987 allowed more accurate comparisons to be made between sources of commissioning, while still retaining the possibility of ranking the sources on each item.

5. Appendix B is the questionnaire completed by platoon sergeants. It is similar to the commander's questionnaire, and consists of background, West Point Study Group, and a few additional items.

III. RESULTS

A. During preliminary analysis of the data it quickly became apparent, as it had during the 1977 study, that commanders were biased in favor of platoon leaders whose source of commissioning (SOC) matched their own SOC. For

*Mr. Bob Klemmer served as the action officer for the ODCSPER.

example, USMA commissioned company commanders rated USMA commissioned platoon leaders best in an absolute sense on 21 of the 24 attributes, whereas OCS commissioned commanders rated platoon leaders from OCS best on 14 of the attributes. Guilford (1954) suggests that bias of this sort is common, and that raters tend to rate favorably those with whom they have had significant commonalities, one of which would seem to be SOC.

B. To avoid SOC bias the data analyses emphasized commanders from a given SOC rating only platoon leaders from the other two sources. The analyses also concentrated on the ratings given to USMA platoon leaders, since they are the main focus of this study.

1. Battalion Commander Ratings.

a. Results from the battalion commander ratings are presented in Table 1. The most visible and important results are the favorable ratings given to platoon leaders from all three sources of commissioning. The averages for USMA graduated platoon leaders, 1.90 and 1.92, can be described as slightly better than superior on the five-point rating scale. The 2.24 and 2.06 average ratings for ROTC and OCS commissioned platoon leaders are slightly less than superior.

b. The ratings of USMA platoon leaders by their ROTC and OCS battalion commanders correlated at $r = .96$, indicating extremely strong agreement in their perception of platoon leaders from USMA.

c. Given equal weight to and averaging the OCS and ROTC ratings of USMA graduates for each attribute shows that the seven strongest and seven weakest rated attributes are as follows:

<u>Strongest Rated Attributes</u>	<u>Ratings</u>	<u>Weakest Rated Attributes</u>	<u>Ratings</u>
Sense of integrity	1.42	Ability to talk with troops	2.30
Physical fitness	1.46	Developing subordinates	2.29
Bearing and appearance	1.55	Specific job knowledge	2.25
Strength of character	1.56	Specific job skills	2.24
Potential for advancement	1.61	Maturity	2.16
Intelligence	1.62	Concern for welfare of troops	2.08
Devotion to duty	1.78	Resourcefulness	2.07
Average	1.57	Average	2.20

d. The USMA graduated battalion commanders agreed with the OCS and ROTC commanders on eleven of the fourteen attributes on the strongest and weakest lists. In addition, most of the above items were among the seven strongest and seven weakest rated attributes for ROTC and OCS platoon leaders, indicating that there is a general hierarchy of attributes regardless of source of commission (Appendix C).

TABLE 1
Battalion Commander Mean Ratings of Platoon Leaders

Attributes	OCS Bn Cdr Ratings of Plt Leaders From		ROTC Bn Cdr Ratings of Plt Leaders From	
	USMA	ROTC	USMA	OCS
Strength of Character	1.52	1.89*	1.61	1.95*
Ability to perform under stress	1.87	2.24*	1.91	1.94
Maturity	2.15	2.32	2.18	1.93*
Initiative	2.05	2.33*	2.02	2.12
Ability to talk with troops	2.39	2.42	2.21	1.75*
Intelligence	1.64	2.01*	1.61	2.25*
Physical fitness	1.38	2.01*	1.54	1.74*
Concern for welfare of troops	2.14	2.24	2.03	1.81*
Troop leadership skills	2.11	2.54*	1.99	2.02
Imagination and drive	1.90	2.33*	1.87	2.17*
Understanding role of officer in Army	1.85	2.53*	1.85	2.32*
Potential for advancement	1.58	1.92*	1.64	2.19*
Ability to learn from mistakes	1.79	1.92	1.78	1.92
Bearing and appearance	1.57	2.21*	1.54	1.78*
Sense of integrity	1.40	1.86*	1.44	1.74*
Devotion to duty	1.71	2.07*	1.85	1.76
Specific job knowledge	2.26	2.45	2.24	2.16
Specific job skills	2.22	2.37	2.26	2.20
Getting the job done	1.90	2.18*	1.93	1.99
Developing subordinates	2.32	2.49	2.26	2.27
Warrior instincts for combat	1.96	2.37*	2.04	2.13
Resourcefulness	2.05	2.14	2.09	2.14
Written communication	1.99	2.55*	2.15	2.99
Persistence under adversity	1.95	2.25*	2.02	2.08
Average	1.90	2.24	1.92	2.06
N	80	85	98	100

*Significantly different from USMA rating by a t-test at the .05 level.

Scale: 1=Outstanding, 2=Superior, 3=Acceptable, 4=Marginal, 5=Unsatisfactory

Platoon leaders from all three sources of commissioning received favorable ratings

e. Table 1 also presents comparative data between platoon leaders from USMA and ROTC and OCS. On 16 of the 24 attributes OCS commanders rated USMA graduated platoon leaders significantly better than their ROTC counterparts. On the eight remaining attributes USMA graduates were rated better, in an absolute sense, but the differences were not statistically significant. ROTC commanders rated USMA graduates significantly better on eight attributes and OCS graduates better on three (maturity, ability to talk with troops, and concern for troop welfare). On the remaining attributes there were no statistical differences but the trend was in USMA's favor.

2. Company Commander Ratings.

a. Table 2 shows that company commanders rated platoon leaders from all three sources of commissioning favorably, as judged by the overall averages of 1.81 and 1.96 (USMA), 2.14 (ROTC), and 1.95 (OCS). The ratings of USMA commissioned platoon leaders by their OCS and ROTC company commanders correlated at $r = .85$, indicating very strong agreement in their perceptions.

b. Averaging the OCS and ROTC commander ratings of USMA graduates for each item shows that the seven strongest and seven weakest rated attributes are as follows:

<u>Strongest Rated Attributes</u>	<u>Ratings</u>	<u>Weakest Rated Attributes</u>	<u>Ratings</u>
Sense of integrity	1.54	Ability to talk with troops	2.36
Bearing and appearance	1.62	Developing subordinates	2.30
Intelligence	1.65	Maturity	2.28
Physical fitness	1.65	Concern for welfare of troops	2.04
Potential for advancement	1.66	Troop leadership skills	2.04
Devotion to duty	1.72	Specific job skills	2.03
Understanding role of officer in Army	1.74	Specific job knowledge	2.02
Average	1.65	Average	2.15

c. The USMA graduated company commanders were in agreement with the above list on eleven of the fourteen attributes. In addition, about half of these attributes were also listed as the seven strongest and seven weakest rated attributes for ROTC and OCS platoon leaders (Appendix D).

d. It should be noted that there is very strong agreement between company and battalion commanders on the strongest and weakest rated attributes for USMA commissioned platoon leaders. Six of the seven attributes on both the strongest and weakest rated attributes are identical on the company and battalion commander lists.

e. Table 2 also shows that OCS commanders rated USMA graduated platoon leaders superior to ROTC graduates, in a statistical sense, on eight of the attributes. On all but one of the remaining attributes (ability to learn from mistakes) the trend is also in favor of USMA graduates. However, ROTC graduated commanders were not as favorably disposed to USMA platoon leaders. The ROTC commanders rated both USMA and OCS graduated platoon leaders as each superior to the other on four attributes. USMA was rated better on intelligence, physical fitness, understanding the role of officers in the Army, and written communication. OCS was seen as superior in ability to talk with troops, developing subordinates, maturity, and concern for troop welfare. These same four attributes were USMA's weakest rated attributes in a strictly numerical sense.

TABLE 2
Company Commander Mean Ratings of Platoon Leaders

Attributes	OCS Co Cdr Ratings of Plt Leaders From		ROTC Co Cdr Ratings of Plt Leaders From	
	USMA	ROTC	USMA	OCS
Strength of character	1.72	2.02	1.85	1.90
Ability to perform under stress	1.79	2.05	1.92	1.88
Maturity	2.24	2.31	2.31	1.77*
Initiative	1.72	2.17*	1.95	1.96
Ability to talk with troops	2.38	2.42	2.33	1.78*
Intelligence	1.59	1.93	1.71	2.00*
Physical fitness	1.70	2.00	1.60	1.83*
Concern for welfare of troops	2.00	2.02	2.09	1.72*
Troop leadership skills	2.10	2.44	1.99	1.96
Imagination and drive	1.71	2.14*	2.02	2.08
Understanding role of officer in Army	1.60	2.37*	1.88	2.26*
Potential for advancement	1.59	2.17*	1.72	1.89
Ability to learn from mistakes	1.79	1.77	1.91	1.83
Bearing and appearance	1.50	2.28*	1.74	1.74
Sense of integrity	1.45	1.79	1.64	1.75
Devotion to duty	1.66	1.93	1.78	1.80
Specific job knowledge	2.03	2.26	2.02	2.06
Specific job skills	1.97	2.19	2.10	2.07
Getting the job done	1.66	2.05*	1.92	1.94
Developing subordinates	2.29	2.50	2.30	2.06*
Warrior instincts for combat	1.81	2.31*	2.08	2.09
Resourcefulness	1.90	2.14	2.07	1.91
Written communication	1.57	2.23*	1.97	2.48*
Persistence under adversity	1.69	2.00	2.05	2.04
Average	1.81	2.14	1.96	1.95
N	29	42	193	167

*Significantly different from USMA rating by t-test at the .05 level.

Scale: 1=Outstanding, 2=Superior, 3=Acceptable, 4=Marginal, 5=Unsatisfactory

Platoon leaders from all three sources of commissioning received favorable ratings

3. Platoon Sergeant Ratings.

a. The average platoon sergeant ratings (Table 3) of 2.07 for USMA, 2.47 for ROTC, and 2.28 for OCS are above "acceptable" and close to "superior" for USMA, but are weaker than the ratings given by commanders.

b. For USMA platoon leaders the seven strongest and seven weakest rated attributes by the platoon sergeants are listed below:

<u>Strongest Rated Attributes</u>	<u>Ratings</u>	<u>Weakest Rated Attributes</u>	<u>Ratings</u>
Physical fitness	1.51	Developing subordinates	2.56
Devotion to duty	1.64	Troop leadership skills	2.47
Intelligence	1.68	Ability to talk with troops	2.44
Sense of integrity	1.71	Maturity	2.36
Potential for advancement	1.78	Specific job skills	2.34
Written communication	1.84	Warrior instincts for combat	2.30
Strength of character	1.87	Concern for welfare of troops	2.27
Average	1.72	Average	2.39

c. The overlap between the above lists and the commander lists is extensive, and more than half of the above attributes match those listed by platoon sergeants for ROTC and OCS commissioned platoon leaders.

d. From a comparative standpoint, platoon sergeants rated USMA graduates better than ROTC graduates on all attributes, with statistically significant differences occurring on 17 attributes. They rated USMA graduates better than OCS graduates on 22 of the 23 attributes (all but "ability to talk with troops"), with seven of the comparisons being significant in a statistical sense.

4. Importance of Attributes For Platoon Leaders.

a. Three survey questions asked respondents to list the first, second, and third most essential attributes for platoon leaders to possess. Attributes were given weights of 3, 2, or 1 each time they were listed as first, second, or third most essential. Totals for each attribute were computed and ranked according to their importance, with the highest total being ranked number 1. Results are presented in Table 4 with the order of the attributes based on the rankings of all commanders combined. The correlations among the three officer groups in their rankings is extremely strong ($r = .94$ and $.92$ between USMA and ROTC and OCS respectively, and $.94$ between ROTC and OCS), indicating that the groups were in close agreement on the importance of each attribute. The correlations of platoon sergeant rankings with USMA, ROTC, and OCS rankings were, respectively, $.67$, $.76$, and $.75$, indicating according to Guilford (1954), high agreement. Ratings of the importance of attributes (especially when there is high rater agreement), in conjunction with how graduates performed on those attributes, have relevance for determining where corrective action should be focused.

TABLE 3
Platoon Sergeant Mean Ratings of Platoon Leaders

<u>Attributes</u>	<u>USMA</u>	<u>ROTC</u>	<u>OCS</u>
Strength of character	1.87	2.48*	2.24*
Ability to perform under stress	2.05	2.71*	2.43*
Maturity	2.36	2.75*	2.42
Initiative	2.00	2.39*	2.01
Ability to talk with troops	2.44	2.56	2.33
Intelligence	1.68	2.06*	1.99*
Physical fitness	1.51	2.07*	1.88*
Concern for welfare of troops	2.27	2.34	2.30
Troop leadership skills	2.47	2.74	2.50
Understanding role of officer in Army	2.26	2.75*	2.67*
Potential for advancement	1.78	2.40*	2.33*
Ability to learn from mistakes	2.16	2.32	2.21
Bearing and appearance	1.91	2.51*	2.18
Sense of integrity	1.71	2.12*	2.00
Devotion to duty	1.64	2.16*	1.88
Specific job knowledge	2.25	2.64*	2.36
Specific job skills	2.34	2.62	2.44
Getting the job done	2.05	2.48*	2.18
Developing subordinates	2.56	2.84	2.71
Warrior instincts for combat	2.30	2.75*	2.48
Resourcefulness	2.18	2.59*	2.37
Written communication	1.84	2.25*	2.20*
Persistence under adversity	2.03	2.41*	2.28
Average	<u>2.07</u>	<u>2.47</u>	<u>2.28</u>
N	77	90	76

*Significantly different from USMA rating by t-test at the .01 level.

Scale: 1=Outstanding, 2=Superior, 3=Acceptable, 4=Marginal, 5=Unsatisfactory

Platoon leaders from all three sources of commissioning were rated within the "acceptable" range
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TABLE 4
Importance of Attributes For Platoon Leaders to Possess

<u>Attributes</u>	<u>Ranking Groups*</u>				
	<u>USMA</u>	<u>ROTC</u>	<u>OCS</u>	<u>All Cdrs</u>	<u>Plt Sgts</u>
Troop leadership skills	3	1	1	1	2
Sense of integrity	1	3	2	2	9
Devotion to duty	4	4	4	3	10.5
Strength of character	2	8	5	4.5	10.5
Ability to learn from mistakes	7	2	6	4.5	3
Initiative	5	5	8	6	15
Concern for welfare of troops	10.5	6	7	7.5	1
Warrior instincts for combat	10.5	10	3	7.5	13
Getting the job done	6	9	9	9	8
Ability to perform under stress	8	7	10	10	4
Imagination and drive	9	11	11	11	-
Persistence under adversity	12	12	13	12	17.5
Maturity	13	13	12	13	5
Specific job knowledge	14	14	17	14	13
Developing subordinates	18	15	15	15	13
Understanding role of officer in Army	15	18	16	16	6
Ability to talk with troops	19.5	16	14	17	7
Resourcefulness	16.5	17	19.5	18	16
Intelligence	16.5	19	18	19	17.5
Physical fitness	19.5	20	19.5	20	22
Specific job skills	21.5	22	21.5	21	20
Written communication	23	21	23	22	22
Potential for advancement	21.5	23	24	23	22
Bearing and appearance	24	24	21.5	24	19

*Company and battalion commander ratings were combined for each source of commission.

The order of attributes is based on the ratings of all commanders

5. Comparisons of 1977 and 1987 Survey Results.

a. One of the purposes of this study was to make some general comparisons with the 1977 study. Table 5 presents rankings of the attributes in 1977 and 1987. It should be noted that rankings provide useful data for general purposes but are limited in that they do not give any indication of the degree of differences between ranks. In 1977 the rankings were achieved by directing the platoon sergeants and commanders to rank order (1 through 3) platoon leaders from each commissioning source on each attribute. The 1987 rankings were derived from the ratings using the 1 through 5 scale shown in the Appendices.

b. The data indicate that the 1977 and 1987 rankings of USMA commissioned platoon leaders by ROTC and OCS commanders are similar. Five positive changes for USMA are counterbalanced by six negative changes, with the majority of attribute rankings remaining the same. USMA graduated commander rankings of USMA platoon leaders were identical in 1977 and 1987 (this is remarkably consistent).

c. The attributes listed below were USMA graduated platoon leaders' strongest and weakest attributes compared to ROTC and OCS platoon leaders in both 1977 and 1987:

<u>Strongest Attributes</u>	<u>Weakest Attributes</u>
Sense of integrity	Ability to talk with troops
Physical fitness	Specific job knowledge
Bearing and appearance	Specific job skills
Strength of character	Maturity
Potential for advancement	Concern for welfare of troops
Understanding role of officers in the Army	

d. The platoon sergeant rankings of USMA graduated platoon leaders showed positive changes. USMA graduates in 1987 are ranked first on all but one attribute - ability to talk with troops.

6. Open-Ended Question Results.

a. Each respondent was given the opportunity to write an essay dealing with the strengths and weaknesses of platoon leaders who graduated from ROTC, USMA, or OCS. About 450 essay responses were received but no central focus was apparent. Thus, the responses did not lend themselves to a typical content analysis with tabular presentation of the data. Only highlights will be presented.

TABLE 5
Rankings of USMA Platoon Leaders in 1977 and 1987

Attributes	Ranking Groups							
	USMA Co& Bn Cdrs		ROTC Co& Bn Cdrs		OCS Co& Bn Cdrs		Platoon Sgts	
	'77	'87	'77	'87	'77	'87	'77	'87
Strength of character	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Ability to perform under stress	1	1	1	(2)	2	2	1	1
Maturity	2	2	3	3	2	2	1.5	[1]
Initiative	1	1	1	1	1	(2)	1	1
Ability to talk with troops	2	2	3	3	2.5	[2]	2.5	[2]
Intelligence	1	1	2	[1]	1	1	1	1
Physical fitness	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Concern for welfare of troops	2	2	3	3	3	[2]	2	[1]
Troop leadership skills	1	1	1	(2)	2	2	1.5	[1]
Imagination and drive	1	1	2	[1]	1	1	1	-
Understanding role of officer in Army	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Potential for advancement	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Ability to learn from mistakes	1	1	2	2	1.5	(2)	2	[1]
Bearing and appearance	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Sense of integrity	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Devotion to duty	1	1	1	(2)	1	(2)	1	1
Specific job knowledge	2	2	1	1	2	2	2	[1]
Specific job skills	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	[1]
Getting the job done	1	1	1.5	[1]	2	2		1
Developing subordinates		1		2		2		1
Warrior instincts for combat		1		1		2		1
Resourcefulness		1		3		2		1
Written communication		1		1		1		1
Persistence under adversity		1		1		2		1

Note: Numbers in circles indicate negative changes for USMA; numbers in squares indicate positive changes for USMA.

Strong similarity in commander rankings, but positive changes in platoon sergeant rankings from 1977 to 1987

b. Among the various comments, the most frequent was that it was hard to distinguish among the three sources on their specific strengths and weaknesses, and that platoon leaders were skillful and motivated and that the Army was well served by their contributions. Some respondents stated it was divisive to even try to distinguish among the three sources. Those respondents who did remark about the strengths and weaknesses of graduates from specific commissioning sources focused on areas which supported their multiple-choice answers. Graduates from USMA were viewed as being strong in take-charge leadership skills, understanding what an officer should be and should do, and intelligence. They were seen by some as being immature, inflexible, and too little concerned with troops. OCS graduates were seen as experienced in the day-to-day platoon leader skills, mature, and capable of relating to troops in a positive manner. They were also seen as weak in written communication skills, not able to see the "big picture," and not always capable of making the break from enlisted service. ROTC graduates were viewed as good interpersonally but limited in military knowledge and experience.

IV. DISCUSSION

A. The main purpose of this study was to assess the performance of recent USMA, ROTC, and OCS graduates serving in platoon leader positions. Overall, the results are encouraging - platoon leaders from each source of commissioning were rated towards the favorable end of the scale on the 24 attributes investigated. The results indicate that for the areas investigated in this study, platoon leaders are functioning quite well according to the perceptions of subordinates (platoon sergeants) and superiors (company and battalion commanders).

B. There was a great deal of consistency across rater groups concerning the strongest and weakest rated attributes for USMA graduated platoon leaders, and these ratings were in basic agreement with those from the 1977 study. The strongest rated attributes center around traits which are emphasized at West Point, such as integrity, physical fitness, bearing and character. The weakest rated attributes cluster around interaction with troops and specific job skills.

C. The similarity of the strongest and weakest attributes for USMA graduates in 1977 and 1987 are relative to USMA and should not be interpreted to mean that the many changes at USMA since 1977 had no impact on the performance of USMA graduates. It could be that USMA graduates serving as platoon leaders in 1987 were better prepared on all attributes than they were in 1977, but that the preparation in some areas was better than in other areas. In addition, OCS and ROTC graduates could have been better prepared in 1987 than in 1977 and, therefore, USMA graduates could have retained their same relative ranking even though they demonstrated positive changes in the attributes.

D. Since 1977 there have been a number of changes at USMA (Johnson, 1987), among which were:

1. Introduction of a Drill Cadet Program to assist in eliminating the recognized weakness in cadets' "ability to talk with soldiers" and "concern for troop welfare" by placing them in a environment where effective interpersonal communication and supportive leadership are required.

2. Improved regular communication with the Army Training and Doctrine Command to ensure current knowledge of doctrine and advances in military training. A Military Qualification Standards Level I Program was fully implemented and annual precommissioning conferences involving DA DCSPER, TRADOC, DCSROTC, OCS, and USMA were established.

3. Continuous curriculum revision of MS courses to ensure currency. Revisions focused on introduction to the military profession, map reading, small unit tactics, terrain analysis, combined arms operation, public speaking, air/land battle doctrine, combat organizations, material acquisition procedure, and new equipment orientation.

4. Assignment of NCOs at various levels within USCC to provide opportunity for cadets to interact with non-commissioned officers.

5. Strengthening of ties with Active Army units to ensure that the objectives of Cadet Troop Leader Training and Drill Cadet Programs are achieved.

E. It appears that there have been some changes that impacted positively on the performance of USMA graduates. The best evidence of this are the rankings by platoon sergeants in 1977 and 1987 of "ability to talk with troops," "concern for welfare of troops," "specific job knowledge," and "specific job skills." (Table 5). The changes described in paragraph D were designed to improve the performance of USMA graduates in the four areas mentioned.

F. Based on company and battalion commander ratings, it would seem prudent for USMA to continue to emphasize programs designed to strengthen cadet abilities to talk with and have concern for troops, to develop maturity, and to acquire specific job knowledge and job skills, since these attributes were among USMA's weakest rated attributes in 1977 and 1987. Of these five attributes, "concern for troop welfare" would probably be the focus, since it received higher importance ratings (number 1 by platoon sergeants and number 7 by commanders) than the other four attributes. Developing subordinates, which was not a part of the 1977 survey, was one of USMA graduates' weakest rated attributes in 1987 and should also be an area of emphasis.

G. Results of this study are limited to platoon leader performance, and should not be generalized to performance at any other positions in the Army. In light of USMA's mission to educate and train cadets for professional growth as officers, OIR is continuing its Leader Development Project to provide a much broader focus on USMA graduate performance.

V. SUMMARY OBSERVATIONS

Analysis of the data supports the following observations:

1. Commanders and platoon sergeants gave very positive ratings to platoon leaders commissioned from USMA, ROTC, and OCS on the 24 attributes investigated in this study.

2. Commanders and platoon sergeants rated platoon leaders from USMA more favorably than platoon leaders from ROTC and OCS on most of the attributes.

3. Commanders from USMA ranked platoon leaders from USMA identical to the way they did in 1977 on each of the 19 attributes that were the same on both surveys.
4. Commanders from ROTC and OCS produced identical ranks for platoon leaders from USMA on 13 and 14, respectively, of the attributes in 1977 and 1987. Positive and negative changes for USMA on the remaining variables counter-balanced each other.
5. Platoon sergeants ranked platoon leaders from USMA identical in 1977 and 1987 on 10 of the 17 attributes that were the same on both surveys. On the remaining 7 attributes USMA rankings improved.
6. The strongest and weakest rated attributes for USMA graduates in 1987 are similar to those found in 1977.

VI Conclusion

USMA should continue programs designed to improve cadet ability to talk with and manifest concern for troops, to develop maturity, to acquire specific job knowledge and job skills, and to develop their subordinates.

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This study assessed the platoon leader performance of recent USMA, ROTC, and OCS graduates on 24 attributes judged vital to junior officer performance. Perceptions of platoon leader performance were obtained from subordinates (platoon sergeants) and superiors (company and battalion commanders) by means of a mailed survey. Results indicated that platoon leaders from all three sources of commissioning were rated well, and that USMA graduates were in a favorable position on most of the attributes. It was also found that the strongest and weakest rated attributes for USMA graduates were similar to those identified in a 1977 study.					
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22a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE INDIVIDUAL DR. RICHARD P. BUTLER				22b. TELEPHONE (Include Area Code) 914-938-2614/4324	22c. OFFICE SYMBOL MAOR

APPENDIX A



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF FOR PERSONNEL
WASHINGTON, DC 20310-0300

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

DAPE-ZBR-S

15 May 1987

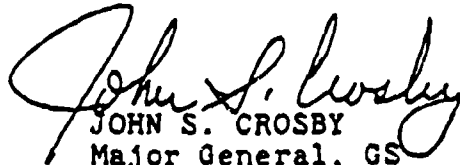
Dear Commander:

I request that you complete the enclosed survey dealing with the performance of platoon leaders. The main purpose of the survey is to collect information that can be used to strengthen the Army's pre-commissioning training and education programs for aspiring officers. The survey asks that you make ratings of platoon leaders who are graduates of the Reserve Officers' Training Corps, the United States Military Academy, and the Officer Candidate School. The information collected will provide an update on officer performance by replicating the major elements of a DA Study Group survey conducted ten years ago.

I ask that you provide your thoughtful opinions within ten days receipt of this package. Do not put your name or other identifying information on the survey. Results will be reported as group data only and no attempt will be made to identify individual respondents.

When you have completed this task, please return the survey through the official mail distribution channels in the pre-addressed envelope provided. Thank you for your assistance in this effort.

2 Encls


JOHN S. CROSBY
Major General, GS
Assistant Deputy Chief
of Staff for Personnel

PLATOON LEADER PERFORMANCE SURVEY
(For Battalion and Company Commanders)

INSTRUCTIONS: Please circle the number corresponding to your response to each of the following questions.

RESPONSES (N=686)

01. What size unit do you command?

- | | |
|--------------|-------|
| 1. Company | 61.6% |
| 2. Battalion | 38.9 |

02. What is your current branch?

- | | |
|--------------------------|-------|
| 1. Infantry | 28.1% |
| 2. Armor | 19.7 |
| 3. Field Artillery | 24.8 |
| 4. Air Defense Artillery | 8.9 |
| 5. Engineer | 0.6 |
| 6. Aviation | 15.2 |
| 7. Other | 2.8 |

03. What is your current rank?

- | | |
|----------|------|
| 1. 01-02 | 1.0% |
| 2. 03 | 57.4 |
| 3. 04 | 2.8 |
| 4. 05 | 38.8 |
| 5. 06 | 0 |
| 6. Other | 0 |

04. What is your source of commission?

- | | |
|----------|-------|
| 1. ROTC | 53.7% |
| 2. USMA | 22.8 |
| 3. OCS | 20.3 |
| 4. Other | 3.2 |

05. How long have you held your current command?

- | | |
|------------------------|-------|
| 1. 0-6 months | 23.9% |
| 2. 7-12 months | 38.6 |
| 3. 13-18 months | 19.7 |
| 4. 19-24 months | 15.0 |
| 5. 25 months or longer | 2.8 |

06. How many months of total command experience (company and above) have you had?

- | | |
|------------------------|-------|
| 1. 12 months or fewer | 37.8% |
| 2. 13-24 months | 20.7 |
| 3. 25-36 months | 13.9 |
| 4. 37-48 months | 13.0 |
| 5. 49 months or longer | 14.6 |

07. To what type of unit are you now assigned?

- | | |
|---------------------------|-------|
| 1. Combat Arms | 76.8% |
| 2. Combat Support | 5.0 |
| 3. Combat Service Support | 3.4 |
| 4. Training | 12.0 |
| 5. Other | 2.9 |

(Over)

08. What is your major command headquarters?

1. Forces Command	47.18
2. Training and Doctrine Command	14.9
3. U.S. Army Europe	31.0
4. Western Command	2.3
5. U.S. Army Korea	3.7
6. Other	1.0

For the attributes listed in Items 09 to 32, please think of the ROTC, USMA, and OCS graduates who are serving with you, or under your command, as platoon leaders (or equivalent position, e.g., fire direction or survey officer). Based on your observations of them as platoon leaders, use the scale below to rate the overall effectiveness of the graduates of each commissioning source.

1 = Outstanding
2 = Superior
3 = Acceptable
4 = Marginal
5 = Unsatisfactory
6 = No opportunity to observe

(FOR RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS 09-32, SEE
APPENDICES C AND D; FOR QUESTIONS 33-
35, SEE TABLE 4).

	<u>ROTC</u>	<u>USMA</u>	<u>OCS</u>
09. Strength of character	_____	_____	_____
10. Ability to perform under stress	_____	_____	_____
11. Maturity	_____	_____	_____
12. Initiative	_____	_____	_____
13. Ability to talk with troops	_____	_____	_____
14. Intelligence	_____	_____	_____
15. Physical fitness	_____	_____	_____
16. Concern for welfare of troops	_____	_____	_____
17. Troop leadership skills	_____	_____	_____
18. Imagination and drive	_____	_____	_____
19. Understanding role of officer in the Army	_____	_____	_____
20. Potential for advancement	_____	_____	_____
21. Ability to learn from mistakes	_____	_____	_____
22. Bearing and appearance	_____	_____	_____
23. Sense of integrity	_____	_____	_____
24. Devotion to duty	_____	_____	_____
25. Specific job knowledge	_____	_____	_____
26. Specific job skills	_____	_____	_____
27. Getting the job done	_____	_____	_____
28. Developing subordinates	_____	_____	_____
29. Warrior instincts for combat	_____	_____	_____
30. Resourcefulness	_____	_____	_____
31. Written communication	_____	_____	_____
32. Persistence under adversity	_____	_____	_____

33. From the list of attributes in Items 09 to 32, which one is the single most essential for platoon leaders to have? Write the number of your answer here:
_____.

34. Which attribute is the second most essential? Write the number of your answer here:
_____.

35. Which attribute is the third most essential? Write the number of your answer here:
_____.

36. How many ROTC, USMA, and OCS graduates did you have in mind when you responded to Items 09 to 32?

MEAN RESPONSE

____ ROTC graduates	10.2
____ USMA graduates	6.1
____ OCS graduates	4.1

Please write below any comments you have on the strengths and weaknesses of platoon leaders who graduated from ROTC, USMA, or OCS.



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF FOR PERSONNEL
WASHINGTON, DC 20310-0300

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

DAPE-ZBR-S

15 May 1987

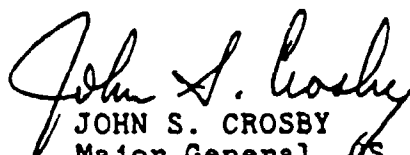
Dear Platoon Sergeant:

I request that you complete the enclosed survey dealing with the performance of platoon leaders. The main purpose of the survey is to collect information that can be used to strengthen the Army's pre-commissioning training and education programs for aspiring officers. The survey asks that you make ratings of platoon leaders who are graduates of the Reserve Officers' Training Corps, the United States Military Academy, and the Officer Candidate School. The information collected will provide an update on officer performance by replicating the major elements of a DA Study Group survey conducted ten years ago.

I ask that you provide your thoughtful opinions within ten days receipt of this package. Do not put your name or other identifying information on the survey. Results will be reported as group data only and no attempt will be made to identify individual respondents.

When you have completed this task, please return the survey through the official mail distribution channels in the pre-addressed envelope provided. Thank you for your assistance in this effort.

2 Encls


JOHN S. CROSBY
Major General, US
Assistant Deputy Chief
of Staff for Personnel

PLATOON LEADER PERFORMANCE SURVEY
(For Platoon Sergeants)

INSTRUCTIONS: Please circle the number corresponding to your response to each of the following questions.

	<u>RESPONSES (N=107)</u>
01. What is your current branch?	
1. Infantry	26.2%
2. Armor	21.5
3. Field Artillery	23.4
4. Air Defense Artillery	9.3
5. Engineer	0
6. Aviation	12.1
7. Other	7.5
02. What is your current rank?	
1. E6	20.6%
2. E7	79.4
3. Other	
03. How long have you been assigned to your present position as a platoon sergeant?	
1. 0-6 months	24.3%
2. 7-12 months	29.9
3. 13-18 months	15.0
4. 19-24 months	7.5
5. 25 months or longer	23.4
04. How long have you served in the Army as a platoon sergeant?	
1. 0 - 2 years	37.4%
2. 3 - 5 years	43.9
3. 6 - 8 years	15.0
4. 9 years or longer	3.7
05. To what type of unit are you now assigned?	
1. Combat Arms	79.2
2. Combat Support	7.5
3. Combat Service Support	2.8
4. Training	8.4
5. Other	1.9
06. What is your major command headquarters?	
1. Forces Command	40.4%
2. Training and Doctrine Command	11.5
3. U.S. Army Europe	30.8
4. Western Command	7.7
5. U.S. Army Korea	4.8
6. Other	4.8

(Over)

For the attributes listed in items 07 to 29, please think of the ROTC, USMA, and OCS graduates who have served as your platoon leaders (or equivalent position, e.g., fire direction or survey officer) during the last three years. Based on your observations of them as platoon leaders, use the scale below to rate the overall effectiveness of the graduates of each commissioning source.

- 1 - Outstanding
- 2 - Superior
- 3 - Acceptable
- 4 - Marginal
- 5 - Unsatisfactory
- 6 - No opportunity to observe

(FOR RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS 07-29, SEE TABLE 3 IN THE TEXT; FOR QUESTIONS 30-32, SEE TABLE 4).

	<u>ROTC</u>	<u>USMA</u>	<u>OCS</u>
07. Strength of character	_____	_____	_____
08. Ability to perform under stress	_____	_____	_____
09. Maturity	_____	_____	_____
10. Initiative	_____	_____	_____
11. Ability to talk with troops	_____	_____	_____
12. Intelligence	_____	_____	_____
13. Physical fitness	_____	_____	_____
14. Concern for welfare of troops	_____	_____	_____
15. Troop leadership skills	_____	_____	_____
16. Understanding role of officer in the Army	_____	_____	_____
17. Potential for advancement	_____	_____	_____
18. Ability to learn from mistakes	_____	_____	_____
19. Bearing and appearance	_____	_____	_____
20. Sense of integrity	_____	_____	_____
21. Devotion to duty	_____	_____	_____
22. Specific job knowledge	_____	_____	_____
23. Specific job skills	_____	_____	_____
24. Getting the job done	_____	_____	_____
25. Developing subordinates	_____	_____	_____
26. Warrior instincts for combat	_____	_____	_____
27. Resourcefulness	_____	_____	_____
28. Written communication	_____	_____	_____
29. Persistence under adversity	_____	_____	_____

30. From the list of attributes in Items 07 to 29, which one is the single most essential for platoon leaders to have? Write the number of your answer here:
_____.

31. Which attribute is the second most essential? Write the number of your answer here:
_____.

32. Which attribute is the third most essential? Write the number of your answer here:
_____.

33. How many ROTC, USMA, and OCS graduates did you have in mind when you responded to Items 07 to 29?

MEAN RESPONSE

_____ ROTC graduates	4.4
_____ USMA graduates	3.3
_____ OCS graduates	3.7

Please write below any comments you have on the strengths and weaknesses of platoon leaders who graduated from ROTC, USMA, or OCS.

APPENDIX C

Battalion Commander Mean Ratings of Platoon Leaders

Attributes	USMA Bn Cdr Ratings of Platoon Leaders			ROTC Bn Cdr Ratings of Platoon Leaders			OCS Bn Cdr Ratings of Platoon Leaders		
	USMA	From ROTC	OCS	USMA	From ROTC	OCS	USMA	From ROTC	OCS
Strength of character	1.58	1.86	2.16*	1.61	1.86*	1.95*	1.52	1.89*	1.63
Ability to perform under stress	1.50	2.11*	1.74	1.91	2.14*	1.94	1.87	2.24*	1.83
Maturity	2.22	2.28	1.64*	2.18	2.25	1.93*	2.15	2.32	1.66*
Initiative	1.83	2.25*	2.06	2.02	2.13	2.12	2.05	2.33*	1.96
Ability to talk to troops	2.29	2.37	1.68*	2.21	2.25	1.75*	2.39	2.42	1.67*
Intelligence	1.56	1.89*	2.39*	1.61	1.90*	2.25*	1.64	2.01*	2.15*
Physical fitness	1.44	1.92*	1.58	1.54	1.97*	1.74*	1.38	2.01*	1.44
Concern for welfare of troops	1.78	2.00	1.68	2.03	2.01	1.81*	2.14	2.24	1.73*
Troop leadership skills	1.83	2.22*	1.84	1.99	2.40*	2.02	2.11	2.54*	1.86*
Imagination and drive	1.81	2.14	2.13	1.87	2.09*	2.17*	1.90	2.33*	1.93
Understanding role of officer in Army	1.92	2.33*	2.45*	1.85	2.48*	2.32*	1.85	2.53*	2.35*
Potential for advancement	1.61	1.86	2.03*	1.64	1.86*	2.19*	1.58	1.92*	1.96*
Ability to learn from mistakes	1.64	1.67	1.87	1.78	1.85	1.92	1.79	1.92	1.74
Bearing and appearance	1.44	1.94*	1.55	1.54	2.09*	1.78*	1.57	2.21*	1.58
Sense of integrity	1.39	1.69*	1.90*	1.44	1.76*	1.74*	1.40	1.86*	1.60*
Devotion to duty	1.67	1.97	1.81	1.85	1.97	1.76	1.71	2.07*	1.67
Specific job knowledge	2.19	2.36	2.00	2.24	2.43	2.16	2.26	2.45	2.05
Specific job skills	2.33	2.44	2.13	2.26	2.43	2.20	2.22	2.37	2.00*
Getting the job done	1.81	2.00	1.94	1.93	2.09	1.99	1.90	2.18*	1.82
Developing subordinates	2.22	2.47	2.16	2.26	2.41	2.27	2.32	2.49	2.00*
Warrior instincts for combat	2.00	2.37*	2.03	2.04	2.26	2.13	1.96	2.37*	1.82
Resourcefulness	1.89	2.11	1.97	2.09	2.14	2.14	2.05	2.14	1.97
Written communication	2.28	2.69	3.03*	2.15	2.55*	2.99	1.99	2.55*	2.78*
Persistence under adversity	1.72	2.14*	1.90	2.02	2.18	2.08	1.95	2.25*	1.83
Average	1.83	2.13	1.99	1.92	2.15	2.06	1.90	2.24	1.88
N	36	36	31	98	110	100	80	85	73

*Significantly different from USMA rating by t-test at the .05 level.

Scale: 1=Outstanding, 2=Superior, 3=Acceptable, 4=Marginal, 5=Unsatisfactory

APPENDIX D

Company Commander Mean Ratings of Platoon Leaders

Attributes	USMA Co Cdr Ratings of Platoon Leaders		ROTC Co Cdr Ratings of Platoon Leaders		OCS Co Cdr Ratings of Platoon Leaders	
	USMA	From ROTC	USMA	From ROTC	USMA	From ROTC
Strength of character	1.60	1.91*	1.85	1.87	1.72	2.02
Ability to perform under stress	1.74	2.23*	1.92	2.05	1.79	2.05
Maturity	2.08	2.35*	2.31	2.14*	2.24	2.31
Initiative	1.86	2.16*	1.95	1.97	1.72	2.17*
Ability to talk to troops	2.22	2.37	2.33	1.97*	2.38	2.42
Intelligence	1.61	1.96*	1.71	1.85	1.59	1.93
Physical fitness	1.50	1.88*	1.60	1.90*	1.70	1.83
Concern for welfare of troops	1.83	1.94	2.09	1.82*	2.00	2.02
Troop leadership skills	2.04	2.38*	1.99	2.20*	2.10	2.44
Imagination and drive	1.94	2.16	2.02	2.02	1.71	2.14*
Understanding role of officer in Army	1.85	2.50*	1.88	2.39*	1.60	2.37*
Potential for advancement	1.66	1.96*	1.72	1.85	1.59	2.17*
Ability to learn from mistakes	1.83	1.90	1.91	1.77	1.79	1.77
Bearing and appearance	1.75	2.18*	1.74	2.00*	1.50	2.28*
Sense of integrity	1.43	1.92*	1.64	1.71	1.45	1.79
Devotion to duty	1.80	2.05*	1.78	1.82	1.66	1.93
Specific job knowledge	2.03	2.31*	2.02	2.18	2.03	2.26
Specific job skills	2.05	2.36*	2.10	2.19	1.97	2.19
Getting the job done	1.86	2.10*	1.92	1.93	1.66	2.05*
Developing subordinates	2.30	2.59*	2.30	2.24	2.29	2.50
Warrior instincts for combat	1.99	2.33*	2.08	2.27*	1.81	2.31*
Resourcefulness	2.04	2.22	2.07	1.98	1.90	2.14
Written communication	1.86	2.66*	1.97	2.23*	1.57	2.23*
Persistence under adversity	1.82	2.24*	2.05	2.07	1.69	2.06
Average	1.86	2.19	1.96	2.02	1.81	2.14
N	95	111	193	225	29	42
		68		167		30

*Significantly different from USMA rating by t-test at the .05 level.

Scale: 1=Outstanding, 2=Superior, 3=Acceptable, 4=Marginal, 5=Unsatisfactory

END

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