

**STRATEGY
RESEARCH
PROJECT**

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GENERATION X

BY

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USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

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ABSTRACT

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This research will examine the generation referred to as Generation X (Xers) that succeeded the baby-boomers. In their 20's, they appear to be very different from preceding generations. This research will identify this generation's characteristics and what makes them unique and lastly, how understanding these characteristics can help the Army National Guard recruit and retain them.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	iii
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	v
INTRODUCTION.....	1
THE MILITIA.....	2
WORLD WAR II.....	3
BABY-BOOMERS.....	5
GENERATION X.....	7
SUMMARY.....	12
RECOMMENDATIONS.....	13
CONCLUSION.....	20
ENDNOTES.....	21
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	23

GENERATION X

Introduction

The graying of the baby-boom generation portends the 'changing of the guard' that will soon take place in the near future in the civilian as well as military establishments as the retiring "boomers" begin trickling out of the work force. The reins will be handed over to the next generation, commonly referred to as "Generation X" (Xers), a term coined by Canadian writer, Douglas Coupland.

For the Army National Guard (ARNG), understanding who this generation is will affect the future of the ARNG, as well as the total army as we enter into the 21st Century. Understanding this generation will enable us to develop strategies to recruit and to retain them as productive members of the ARNG.

To accomplish this, I will compare Guardsmen (militiamen) who served in the Revolutionary War, World War II and Vietnam, underscoring the uniqueness of each generation. Following this I will examine the characteristics of Xers and strategies that can be used to manage them.

The importance of understanding this generation is evident not only for the military but for the civilian sector as well. Margot Hornblower, a noted expert on the subject of Generation X, has stated, "Politicians trolling for votes, churches seeking converts, military services recruiting soldiers, moviemakers looking for viewers and magazines for readers: hardly a sliver of society is exempt from the need to understand and, indeed, cater to this generation."¹²

Consequently, as the Army continues its downward spiral in soldier reduction, the Reserve Component, especially the ARNG, will assume a greater, more important role.

Restructuring will soon put 55% of the combat forces, 46% of the combat support and 47% of the combat service support in the ARNG. To be a partner in the full spectrum force to “fight and win the Nation’s wars, deter aggression and provide a range of military options short of war”, the ARNG must recruit, retain and maintain a motivated, professional and well-trained force.

In understanding Xers it is important to see that differences do exist between Xers and the preceding generations. Recruiting and retaining this generation will require a different set of strategies.

The Militia - The First Generation

On May 14, 1607, settlers went ashore to construct a palisade. One hundred four original settlers represented a cross-section of British social classes and founded the first settlement in America. Along with their customs, traditions and values, they also brought along the belief that “every man was required to have a weapon and all males over the sixteen automatically became a member of the militia.”³ The incentive was clear - each citizen was galvanized by the necessity to protect family and property.

By the 1700’s, the military’s attention turned towards the fight for independence, and the “citizen soldiers,” inspired by the cause of freedom, united together to break the bonds of tyranny. These “citizen soldiers,” representing all walks of life from farmers to shoemakers to blacksmiths and carpenters, were the very fabric of society. Indeed, it was these “ill-trained farmers, citizens, shopkeepers, ready to leave their work, and fight when the enemy approached....”⁴ who formed the backbone of our army.

This generation believed that no free society could exist if its citizens did not accept their responsibility to protect and defend what was dear to them. Of the 376,000 Americans who fought against the British, 146,000 were militiamen. The desire to serve was unmistakably clear: to win freedom. History will recount that the "determined colonists willingly displayed moral commitment and public virtue, rushing into combat as citizen soldiers and steadfastly bearing arms through eight long years of military travail."⁵

True to the citizen soldiers of this generation, public virtue was the consequence of men's private virtue and their willingness to struggle to their own death while defending liberty. Guided by a common set of morals, virtues and beliefs, the citizen soldiers of 1775 felt more than courage; they believed that their quest for liberty was right, not only in their eyes, but in the eyes of God.

The citizen soldiers of World War II shared a similar belief which crystallized their collective spirit to serve in the military in order to defeat the empires of Germany and Japan.

World War II

The era in which men would cast away their plows and pick up their guns did not disappear with the start of World War II. Citizen soldiers dropped their plows, leaped off their tractors or put down their hammers to answer the call of duty. The citizen soldier once again validated Clausewitz's trinity of War - the bridge between the government, the military and the people. Guided by their love of democracy, loyalty to their country and the unfathomable desire to do what was right, citizen soldiers, patriots all, joined to fight tyranny.

These soldiers, born near the turn of the century, were raised in an atmosphere of clear and established values. "If all was not right with the world, at least men knew how to make it so."⁶ In the early 1900's, America was a land of immigrants who brought with them the traditional customs, morals and beliefs from whence they came. All of these ideas intertwined to form the basis of our moral and ethical conscience - a strong belief in god, loyalty to country, honesty, decency, respect and responsibility. Although, two hundred years may have elapsed from the Revolutionary War, the citizen soldiers of World War II served for the same reasons - to protect the family and the Nation. According to Jonathan Daniels it was a time when being an American was a privilege. It was, as Daniels put it, a time when "Americans stand on a continent as men - fighting in the crudest man terms - for ourselves and also for . . . the homeland."⁷

It was a time in which all of America united together for a common purpose. Pamphlets distributed by the Office of Civilian Defense urged everyone to help in the war effort by conserving. Slogans such as "Get along with less" or "Take good care of the things you have" echoed this sentiment. And not surprisingly, everyone did pitch in to do his or her part. Guardsmen too, were a part of the patriotic fervor and served with distinction in World War II. The same principles that guided the militiamen in the Revolutionary War guided the Guardsmen who fought in this war. In fact, "the military responsibility of every citizen had become an article of National faith . . ."⁸

However, the beliefs, morality and traditions shared by these two generations were shattered by the baby-boomers who arrived on the scene to smash the honored, sacrosanct traditions of the past.

Baby-boomers

The baby-boomers (boomers) arrived on the scene and literally slammed into the Vietnam War. This generation was like no other before it or since. No period in modern history witnessed such contrast and turbulence as the sixty's boomers. The boomers witnessed a level of violence and social conflict unparalleled in American history. The assassinations of John F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King, Jr., the first American troops in Vietnam, racial tension as well as race riots represented stark warnings that things were different. It was an era of images, of sights and sounds, of Black Panthers, of civil rights demonstrations, of hippies and their strange dress and of Jimmy Hendrix playing his version of "The Star-Spangled Banner" at Woodstock. The boomers shook the foundations of all Western institutions - nothing and no one would be quite the same afterwards.

The 60's were dominated by the war in Indochina which dragged on for the entire decade. But unlike previous military conflicts, the Vietnam War polarized the country. Public protests were vehement and often violent. Many boomers refused to serve while still others abandoned their country. Boomers were indeed a very different generation guided by a bold set of ideals.

An anti-military attitude was the general thread that united this generation. For example, in a survey conducted by Aaron Nadel in 1973 (Attitude of Youth Towards Military Service, Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense), only 28% of those polled agreed that some military service was expected. Furthermore, only 40% stated that nothing could induce them into military service. This response was clearly opposite from

that of the World War II generation. To boomers, patriotism had nothing to do with serving in Southeast Asia.

The Vietnam War tore at the seams of the nation further sharpening the rift between the two generations. Boomers perceived their elders as untrustworthy, hypocritical, irresponsible and too eager to involve them in an immoral war. The long hair, strange dress, anti-establishment slogans puzzled the older generation and they attributed this behavior to "discontent, lost religion . . . as well as a decline in morality, values and ethics."⁹

Boomers declared war on the traditional beliefs held sacred by the World War II generation (matures). Songs, dress, and slogans such as "Hey LBJ how many kids have you killed today?" or "Hell no we won't go!" typified this pervasive attitude. Sexual taboos disintegrated as boomers embraced the sexual revolution. Perceptions of a decline in morality were fueled by glib slogans of "Make love not war" that headlined newspapers and magazines. Youths were in open rebellion against anyone in authority. To the "matures" the world had been turned on its heels.

New moral norms materialized in the form of changing attitudes and feelings towards church, institutions, patriotism, ethics, marriage and family. Youths across America rejected the values of the older generation and "attacked virtually every belief and value cherished by the American public. They downgraded traditional American aspiration for more material comfort, more money, more education, more leisure and more opportunities for ones self. They challenged authority in every form - law, police, universities, elected officials, marriage, church, sex and drugs. They simply opposed all traditional beliefs."¹⁰

But as the boomers matured and mellowed, they discarded their idealism and embraced the very institutions that they had previously denigrated. Ironically, the very institutions and issues boomers criticized worsened in their hands. Runaway inflation, rising crime, declining traditions, skyrocketing divorce rates, the rise of gangs and violence, unaffordable homes, bankrupt social security system and AIDS, to name a few, were the legacy passed on to the next generation.

Generation X

A generation is forged through its common experiences. The Depression and World War II helped to shape the "matures" while the "boomers" grew up in a world of affluence made possible by the hard work of their parents. Xers, however, "lurched through the recession of the early 80's only to see the mid-decade glitz dissipate in the 1987 stock market crash and the recession of 1990 - 1991."¹¹ The experiences that helped to shape and mold Xers were unique.

Xers, born between 1965 and 1977, seemed to have entered a world vexed by many ills. Technology brought the violence of wars and conflicts (Grenada, Panama, Gulf War, Bosnia) directly into our living-rooms. The alarming rise of AIDs, threats to the environment, pesticides in our drinking water, dioxin in our food and depletion of the ozone layer are some of the many problems facing Xers. Prominent leaders, to include President Clinton and the Sergeant Major of the Army, have been charged with various counts of sexual misconduct, undermining the basic levels of trust that the younger generation should have of its elders.

This situation is worsened by other problems. "An inflation rate of 7% a year guarantees that prices will double in 10 years relative to buying power."¹² Studies by the Congressional Budget Office indicated that Medicare and social security are in severe financial problems and may run out."¹³ "Boomers" inherited, and subsequently bankrupted, a financially sound system. The U.S. population will reach 320 million by the year 2110 and Xers worry not only about supporting the retiring baby-boomers but about a system that will fail them.

A Gallup poll strongly suggests that young people, whose values and attitudes about life have largely been formed and fixed by late teens, will carry these values into adulthood. The formulation of these values is influenced by the events that shape a generation. What are some of the others influences that have molded Xers?

A major impact has been the faltering family. The family unit has traditionally been a key factor in transmitting stable cultural and moral values from generation to generation. However, the "decline in the family structure, divorce and other family-oriented concerns are one of the five major problems facing the nation today."¹⁴ Today three marriages in every five end in divorce.

This predicament has negative side effects. For example, children of divorced parents often harbor feelings of anger or guilt, the worse outcome has been the introduction of "latchkey" children. One study estimates that one out of every three U.S. children between the ages of twelve and seventeen, nearly eight million kids, comes home to a house with no adult present.¹⁵ Six out of ten eighth graders spend at least two hours a day at home alone.

This situation materialized in part due to the rising number of divorces in the U.S. More than a quarter of all children and 40% of today's adults have spent time in a single-parent home by age 16.¹⁶ Also contributing to this dilemma is the necessity for both parents to work in order to maintain an adequate lifestyle. The idyllic lifestyle depicted in the 1950's sitcoms such as "Leave It To Beaver" and "Father Knows Best" is a poignant reminder of the way things were thought to be - certainly not what it was in the 70's. In the early 50's and 60's many moms stayed at home and raised the children. In the 70's as it is today, almost 70% of the mothers must work outside the home in order to support a comfortable standard of living.

Most Xers could not reap the benefits of having a parent at home: being taken care of, receiving the attention that children that age need. Xers endured a situation where parents were just too busy to cultivate family lifestyles that fostered loving attention on their children.

Thus, children were left to their own devices while their parents were busy earning a living. Xers wiled away the hours alone watching television, playing video games or using the computer. Xers viewed more television than any other generation. By the end of high school, the average teenager had viewed more than 18,000 hours of television, averaging between 2 - 4 hours a day. The television had become the ultimate pacifier and baby-sitter.

What has been the effect of this television exposure? Xers probably witnessed more acts of violence and murders than any other generation in history. Not only did they witness fictional acts of violence on TV, they also vicariously experienced riots, live-action crime scenes even wars via news minicams. "This has helped them to become

very freedom-minded, individualistic and self-absorbed, cynical”¹⁷ says author Bob Loysk.

This cynicism, according to many educators, sociologists and researchers, has created in the Xers an unrealistic, unhealthy even distorted view of reality. Crime, acts of violence, prominent figures (political, sports or military) involved in drugs, sex or other scandalous incidents are commonplace in the media today and in the minds of Xers.

Xers have been tainted somewhat by their mistrust for their elders. “No matter what I plan for, when I finally get there, it’s always something different.”¹⁸ This skepticism towards the future reflects the attitude of many Xers. It may seem to Xers that all they have inherited from their seniors are problems.

The negative influence of spending so much time alone have had two unintended positive outcomes. First, Xers are very independent. As youngsters, Xers found it necessary to make decisions in the absence of their parents. Self-reliance, decisiveness and resourcefulness were survival skills.

The other added benefit of spending so much time alone has been their familiarity with the computer. They are truly the first computer literate generation. Starting with the Atari, moving to Nintendo and other sophisticated video games, Xers graduated to the desk top computer. Whereas most “boomers” find the computer a puzzling, complex tool, Xers are totally at home with its form and function.

Xers share other positive traits. Rather than rejecting society as did the baby-boom generation, Xers are proving to be highly competitive. Compared to 66% of boomers, eighty-two percent of Xers polled say competition makes them perform better. This competitive spirit is exemplified in the sentiment that they “have to take what they can

get in this world." To sum up thus far, Xers share the following common characteristics: cynical, independent, computer literate and competitive.

"Taking what I can in this world," illustrates another Xer characteristic. Xers believe that compromising their integrity is often necessary to achieve success. In fact, success is more important than integrity. Self-righteousness has given way to situational ethics and values. This attitude merely reflects events they have witnessed in real life from Watergate to the Challenger "O" ring controversy to Whitewater and most recently to the predicaments that President Clinton and the Sergeant Major McKinney find themselves in. The celebrated trials of the "Au Pair" and O.J. Simpson only perpetuate the image of the topsy-turvy world boomers have created and muddled.

All of these influences have tainted the attitude Xers have towards work. Having watched their grandparents work all of their lives with little to show except for a gold watch and tiny pension, Xers believe there is more to life than work and worrying about health care costs. Worse yet, many have witnessed their parents facing layoffs or mid-life career changes and therefore have a skewed vision of job security. If employers, managers, those "at the top" are not committed to their employees, Xers "feel they don't want to wait around and pay their dues."¹⁹ Xers do not feel the same sense of loyalty and obligation to stick with one job as their parents did. On the contrary, they will continually seek ways to upgrade their lifestyles. A particular job is simply a stepping stone to another more lucrative one. They see themselves more as lifelong job hoppers than company loyalists.

According to Losyk, Xers also share other characteristics. Xers graduate later from college, live in their parents' home longer, regard work as a means to attain money for

fun and leisure, seek instant gratification and expect a lot for nothing. Xers also communicate differently. They prefer to read copy that uses short, snappy phrases and prefer that the delivery to be quick, exciting and entertaining.

Summary

Thus Xers are characterized as: •cynical •have different values •distrust older generation •have a distorted view of reality •spent a lot of time alone •products of divorce •competitive •do not feel loyalty to an organization •believe in getting what they can and will revert to situational ethics to do so •desire instant gratification without having to work for it •seek discipline and order they lacked in childhood •will return to the values of the past as guides to rearing their own children •will seek a stable family life •many are raised in single-parent families or in a family situation where both parents work •parents unable to spend a great deal of time with them •independent

As an educator, I have spoken to many senior teachers who can recall a time when children sat in neat rows and obediently did what they were told. How many parents today can remember when children did not dare answer back to their parents? Jane Nelsen states in her book that parents and teachers today are feeling frustrated because children don't behave the way they used to in "the good old days."²⁰ In the "good old days" adults gave children an example or model of submission, respect, discipline and obedience. Mom listened to dad, dad listened to his boss and so forth. Today, it is difficult to find anyone who is willing to accept a submissive role in life because everyone is equal in status to everyone else. Children as well as teenagers have lost their respect for their elders whether that elder is a teacher, minister, police officer or judge.

Recommendations

So what can leaders within the ARNG do with this information? It is my view that we can use this information as a tool towards understanding Xers in order to recruit and more importantly, retain them in our units. I share Losyk's opinion that "Xer characteristics exasperate the baby boomers but with the right management and motivating techniques . . . there is a lot we can learn from them."²¹ The key is managing and motivating.

One characteristic of Xers is their inherent distrust of our generation. To begin earning their trust it is important that our recruiters represent an accurate and honest picture of what being a member of the ARNG entails. Too often, I've spoken to recruits who complain that recruiters have "guaranteed" them an assignment that has no field duty or some other stipulation only to discover the ingenuousness of the promise.

New recruits should be familiar with both the positive and negative aspects of membership in the ARNG. Scrapbooks, videotapes, dialogues (with other recruits) that realistically and truthfully portray what it will be like at basic, AIT, Inactive Duty for Training (IDTs) and Annual Training (AT) will help the recruit to fully understand what he or she is getting into. A recruit should be made aware that, at times, an infantryman, for example, will undergo training during which he may be cold, hungry, tired or even bored but that this is all part of life in the ARNG. If a recruit is led to believe otherwise, he will realize he has been misled and this will only reinforce the suspicions he previously held.

A new recruit should also be inculcated with the heritage and lineage of the ARNG and in particular, his unit of assignment (similar to what the Marine Corps does). ARNG units do not make it a matter of policy to familiarize soldiers with their unit history nor for that matter, the history of the Guard. The Marine Corps' emphasis on this is sufficient evidence of its importance. According to AWC student, Colonel Paul Tully of the Marine Corps, teaching new recruits the history and heritage of the Marine Corps is extremely important in developing esprit and pride. Referred to as "Corps Values," the Marine Corps devotes many hours for this purpose throughout the recruit's basic training and continues throughout his career. Marines take pride in saying, "There is no such thing as a retired marine - once a marine, always a marine." The success of the Marine Corps emphasis on teaching recruits their "roots" is evident in the legendary pride and esprit exhibited by marines.

The ARNG can learn from the Marines and apply this to our advantage. The National Guard celebrated its 361st birthday in 1997 and can boast a long and proud history - much longer than any of the services. Individual ARNG units can trace their lineage back into history and some, like the Pennsylvania National Guard, can trace their heritage back to the early colonial settlements.

Furthermore, ARNG units have participated in all the major conflicts involving the United States. Creating a link with the past will help Xers to understand that they are part of a succession of soldiers who have served proudly in units deeply rooted in our history. Creating this tie with the past can be very important in convincing the Xer to remain with the unit.

Xers do not share a sense of loyalty to an organization as perhaps their parents did. Xers view a job as simply a stepping stone to another and membership in the ARNG may be looked as a temporary thing or a change in venue from the other more mundane aspects of life. Thus, developing the Xers' sense of pride, commitment and loyalty in belonging to that unit is an important factor in setting the right tone.

Subsequently, once the new recruit enlists it is critical to maintain contact with him. He needs to recognize that he is part of a family, albeit, a large one. Remember, many Xers grew up in single-parent environments or homes in which parents were extremely busy. For this reason, Xers spent many hours alone without the benefit of parents who could devote the time necessary to do what families do best - communicate, support each other and so forth. The nuclear family setting in which parents instinctively passed on their values, morals and traditions did not exist for many of the X generation.

Being assigned a sponsor as a recruit is the surest way to open the channels of communication. This responsibility is not confined just to duty hours but include the time that soldier is away from the armory - it is, in fact, a 24 hour a day responsibility. Units which pay only cursory attention to this fail to understand its importance. The result is often a sponsor who is designated in name only but who assumes little or no responsibility to the recruit.

The sponsor maintains this relationship until the recruit has completed his basic and advanced individual training up to the point he begins to attend regular drills. Once he attends his regular IDT's it becomes the responsibility of his normal chain of command to assume and maintain this relationship with the soldier. Officers as well as NCOs must make it a top priority to continue this open channel of communication via periodic

counseling, informal talks, get together or of other means to simply get to know what the soldier is thinking. Creating an atmosphere of open communication is one way to create a unit environment that fosters a feeling of trust, concern and belonging that is essential for any successful organization. The sponsor is the linchpin that eases the recruit's transition from civilian to military life.

As important as communication is it not the sole answer to retention. The unit environment must be built around a framework of discipline, consistency, fairness and high ethical standards. As latchkey kids, Xers spent many long hours alone, in effect, doing as they pleased. This self-reliant, independent attitude that characterizes the Xer materialized out of necessity of having to do things for themselves - to make their own decisions, to fend for themselves.

This independent, questioning, self reliant trait can be channeled in the right direction. After all, soldiers who exhibit these kind of qualities have the potential to be good leaders. On the other hand, I believe many Xers join the military in search of the discipline and order they lacked in their formative years.

The ARNG is an ideal organization for providing what the Xer seeks. Being consistent in applying rules and regulations is necessary to appease the cynical nature of Xers. Xers are not prone to accept things simply because someone says to and will question those in positions of authority. Not applying rules fairly and equitably across the board would only confirm the mistrust they have for those in positions of authority.

Xers do not share the same sense of what is right and what is wrong as did the "boomers". In many instances, they find it palatable to vacillate between what is right and what is wrong depending on the situation. Hornblower states that Xers feel that

success is more important than integrity. Because Xers subscribe to this acceptance of "situational ethics" leaders in the ARNG must be the standard bearers of uncompromised ethical and moral standards.

Hornblower further states that Xers have shown up in school without having been taught right from wrong, without self-esteem and without discipline. But it is this failing that I believe draws the Xer to the military. The services exemplifies the highest moral and ethical standards and expects everyone to "tow the line".

To summarize thus far, the most propitious organizational environments for Xers foster the following: open communication, unit pride, discipline, consistent application of rules and regulations, high moral and ethical standards. The key to achieving these goals rest with the unit commander and the full-time force. The ARNG must select only the best to fill these positions.

Because the commander has the most important role he should be a full-timer. The present situation in the ARNG allows for full-time commanders to be based on the person not the position. For example, of the past six commanders in one of the battalions in my state, two have been full-time AGRs, two M-day, and two full-time technicians. The full-time AGR or technician commanders have a decided advantage over the M-day commander. An M-day commander has difficulty balancing the needs of his civilian occupation with the added requirements of being a commander in the ARNG. No one would argue that a commander is the key to any organization, and for that reason, all command positions should be full-time.

The full-time AGR force in any unit must be the best. It is instrumental in developing and maintaining unit esprit, discipline, communications and unit pride. The

commander and his full-time staff together must create the environment that fosters a sense of pride and accomplishment that make soldiers willing to stay and to give it their best effort. They must take care of their soldiers to include making them understand the "big picture".

Xers saw their parents and grandparents work hard to earn a living and questioned the value of spending an entire lifetime working for what seemed to them a very paltry reward - a gold-plated watch, or an engraved pen. Xers seem to relish the idea that there is more to life than this. It is not difficult to fathom why Xers want instant gratification without having to work for it. The value of knowing this attitude is recognizing that Xers must understand the system itself - especially that getting something for nothing is not the army way. Xers need to view that getting ahead requires diligence and hard work. Rewards for this diligence, industriousness, loyalty will materialize in the form of promotions and assignments of increased responsibility.

Knowing how the system works may not be important for those senior enlisted and officers who are familiar with it. For the Xers nothing could be further from the truth. The Xer needs to understand "what's in it" for them and how they can get there. Understanding what it takes to be successful in the ARNG provides the Xers with a vision of what is possible and a path by which to get there. They know that they cannot get something for nothing and in fact, this challenges their competitive spirit. This path includes many forks along the way but they ultimately "captain their own ship". This must be communicated to the Xers at the very beginning of their career.

For the junior officer and young recruit entering the ARNG, a commitment to stay with a unit can be heightened by a sound personnel management system in place of the

erratic method presently utilized by the ARNG to manage promotions and assignments. Of the many junior officers in my unit whom I've spoke to, none understand the promotion or assignment system.

For both officers and enlisted, commanders and full-time support staff must explain the system so that everyone understands where they are now and what the future has in store for them. assignments are concerned, no system exists. They are determined largely by luck. It is imperative for the Xer to understand how he moves up through the ladder (chain-of-command) but presenting this is impossible due to the absence of a management system that identifies both officers and enlisted for future key assignments.

Two things need to be implemented to resolve this deficiency. First, career progression should be discussed with each soldier. Each young soldier should be provided a general overview of the different assignments/positions he can expect as well as what requirements he must fulfill as he continues his career in the ARNG.

Secondly, and more importantly, company commanders must take the responsibility (commander, 1SG or S1) of monitoring the soldiers within their command to promote the best and brightest and to mentor them for positions of increased responsibility (squad leader, platoon sergeant). But all soldiers, enlisted and officer, need to be continually counseled throughout their careers. They need to be counseled on their performance, where they need to improve in and what they can expect in the future.

Higher commands (brigade, division, STARC) too, must monitor the officer and senior NCO ranks for those showing the most potential for positions of increased responsibility. Unlike the active component where soldiers rotate to different duty stations and assignment, the ARNG is limited in the number of senior officer/NCO

positions available. Often, these positions are occupied by the same person for years. Again, keeping the soldier informed and abreast of the situation will eliminate apprehension on his part and allow him to make decisions to guide his own future

Conclusion

Tim Russert, moderator of the television show, "Meet the Press" appeared on the December 15, 1997 "Today Show" in which he compared the last three generations. For the World War II generation, the Depression, retirement and money topped the list of what they considered to be the most important issues that they faced. To the boomers, Vietnam, sex and civil unrest were important. Having enough money, being able to own a home, AIDS, family life and feeling there is more to life than work are issues that are important to Xers.

Although Xers did not force their way onto center stage as did the boomers they are nevertheless, a generation with its own unique characteristics. Xers represent the future of the ARNG. To be a partner in the full spectrum force to "fight and win the Nation's wars, deter aggression and provide a range of military options short of war," the ARNG must recruit and retain a motivated, professional and well-trained force. Understanding Xers and applying the strategies discussed in this paper, will help the ARNG accomplish this. (word count: 5,670).

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- ¹⁵ Hornblower, Margaret, Great X, Times, June 9, 1997, page 64.
- ¹⁶ Losyk, Bob, Generation X, Times, June 9, 1997, page 60.
- ¹⁷ Hornblower, Margaret, Great X, Times, June 9, 1997, page 60.
- ¹⁸ Losyk, Bob, Generation X: What They Think and What They Do, Futurist, Mar 97, page 12.
- ¹⁹ Nelson, Jane, Positive Discipline, Ballantine Books, New York, 1981.
- ²⁰ Loysk, page 10.

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