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**INITIAL ENTRY TRAINING: REDUCING FIRST TERM ATTRITION
THROUGH EFFECTIVE ORGANIZATIONAL SOCIALIZATION**

BY

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USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

**Initial Entry Training: Reducing First Term Attrition Through Effective
Organizational Socialization**

by

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ABSTRACT

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This paper examines Initial Entry Training (IET) from an organizational behavior perspective to identify if the Army's socialization experience can be enhanced to have a positive impact on first term attrition within the Army. This is an important issue for today's Army as it faces increased recruiting challenges and first term attrition rates that hover between thirty-five and thirty-nine per cent. A deadly combination that directly threatens the Army's ability to maintain a high quality force. Behavioral scientists claim that attrition in organizations can be attributed to many factors such as lack of commitment to the organization, poor skill development, mismatch in employee expectations, lack of motivation, and failure to meet necessary performance standards. Effective socialization programs should address each one of these factors by developing and preparing new members to perform in their organization. Initial socialization to the Army occurs in Initial Entry Training. I have applied some basic socialization principles to IET looking for opportunities to improve our process and I believe that the Army's socialization process can be enhanced to produce the type of soldiers committed to serve our nation in the twenty-first century.

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INITIAL ENTRY TRAINING: REDUCING FIRST TERM ATTRITION THROUGH EFFECTIVE ORGANIZATIONAL SOCIALIZATION

The final test of a leader is that he leaves behind in other men the conviction and the will to carry on.

— Walter Lippmann

The Army is experiencing personnel problems unlike any confronted in recent history. Soldier quality, recruiting, retention and attrition have all garnered the attention of many senior leaders as they attempt to find solutions to these problems. First term attrition is one facet of this larger manning problem that has received increased attention in recent years. "First term attrition rates for the United States Army hovered between 31 to 39 per cent for the last ten years."¹ Soldiers that fail to complete their first term of enlistment are expensive, time consuming, and detrimental to unit readiness. "Former Army Chief of Staff, General Dennis Reimer asked his senior commanders in 1996 to take a hard look at attrition as he watched the rate rise to 39 per cent for first term soldiers."² The Army's new Chief of Staff, General Eric Shinseki, recently provided guidance to his senior commanders on manning the Army's warfighting units. Within this message, he established first term attrition goals of 12 percent for Initial Entry Training and 5 per cent for the remainder of the soldier's first term of enlistment.³ This calls for a 22 per cent reduction from the previous year's attrition rate and it represents a significant challenge for leaders throughout the Army.

The Chief of Staff has given his senior commanders a very difficult and complex task. What causes first term attrition? Why do so many soldiers that appear to have the potential to contribute to the Army get separated from the service before they complete their full term of enlistment? Reasons such as frequent deployments, poor quality of life, and low pay seem like plausible answers but upon further analysis they seem to apply more to retention than first term attrition. For most junior leaders, attrition directly relates to soldier quality and standards, not the training process. These leaders generally think that our attrition rates are so high because recruit quality is so low. Raising the bar on recruit entrance requirements is their solution of choice. While this makes sense intuitively, accession statistics do not support the poor quality response, but there may be something in the notion that first term attrition is related to new recruit differences.

Another solution is to lower the standard. This option is an often acknowledged but unacceptable fix that is typically offered as a loosely veiled threat to stop any discussion of attrition statistics by senior leaders. Unfortunately, the discussion will not stop as long as the Army continues to confront personnel manning challenges. As the discussion continues, the veiled threat may become a reality if we do not seriously study attrition from all sides.

Behavioral scientist claim that attrition in organizations can be attributed to many factors such as lack of commitment to the organization, poor skill development, mismatch in employee expectations, lack of motivation, and failure to meet necessary performance standards. These same scientist claim that "an

important test of whether socialization has succeeded is whether new recruits stay with an organization or leave soon after entry.”⁴ Effective socialization programs should address each one of these factors by developing and preparing new members to perform in their organization.

Initial socialization to the Army occurs in Initial Entry Training, which includes Basic Training, One Station Unit Training, and Advanced Individual Training. The Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) commander, General John Abrams describes this process as “Transforming Citizens to Soldiers.”⁵ I participated in the development and training of over five thousand Infantry soldiers at Fort Benning, Georgia while serving as an Infantry One Station Unit Training Battalion commander. During this period, attrition stayed relatively constant between 13 to 15 per cent as it had for the previous two years.⁶ I had the personal and professional pleasure of working with over 170 extremely competent Drill Sergeants, senior NCO’s, and commissioned officers over this two year period and I sincerely felt that we were doing everything we could to turn every new soldier into a quality Infantryman. We did not meet the goals recently established by General Shinseki and upon further analysis and reflection a couple of hypotheses surface that merit closer examination. First, we as an organization did not fully appreciate that Initial Entry Training was in fact an organizational socialization program. Second, we did not understand the principles, key components or processes of socialization and therefore, we did not capitalize on the full potential of an effective socialization program. This paper reflects that examination as it takes a closer look at Initial Entry Training from an organizational behavior perspective to identify if the Army’s socialization experience can be enhanced to have a positive impact on first term attrition within the Army.

This paper is organized into four parts. The first portion of the paper defines organizational socialization and identifies four key principles of effective organizational socialization based on a review the relevant literature in this field. The next portion develops these principles and demonstrates their application to IET illustrating their relevancy to the Army’s socialization program. The third portion discusses the application of these principles to IET as evaluative criteria to identify potential strengths and weaknesses in the execution of IET. The final portion of the paper discusses several recommendations for enhancing IET as the Army’s organizational socialization process.

ORGANIZATIONAL SOCIALIZATION PROCESS

What is organizational socialization and does this concept really apply to Initial Entry Training? Edgar Schein, a noted sociologist, defines organizational socialization as, “the process of ‘learning the ropes,’ the process of being indoctrinated and trained, the process of being taught what is important in an organization.”⁷ He also writes, “the concept refers to the process by which a new member learns the value system, the norms, and the required behavior patterns of the organization.”⁸ Other authors describe organizational socialization as “the process by which newcomers are transformed from outsiders to participating, effective members of the organization. The process is also a vehicle for bringing new members into the organizational culture.”⁹ General Abrams describes Initial Entry Training as “the

process of transforming America's youth to soldiers where the principle goal of IET units is to develop soldiers of character, competent in their warfighting and technical skills, possessing a warrior spirit, who can effectively contribute to their first unit and who can successfully complete his or her first enlistment."¹⁰ TRADOC Regulation 350-6, Initial Entry Training Policies and Administration, states that, "IET develops and delivers these quality soldiers to the fighting force by employing a five-phased 'soldierization' program."¹¹ Soldierization is synonymous with socialization where the purpose and goals of IET as described by General Abrams correlate directly to the description of organizational socialization processes defined by Schein and others.

KEY SOCIALIZATION PRINCIPLES

If IET is the Army's socialization program, then what do we need to understand about socialization to maximize the effectiveness of the process? Organizational socialization is a complex and potentially very powerful process that has received extensive attention from all disciplines within the behavioral science field. It is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss every facet of the socialization process. Therefore, I have identified four key principles/components that appear to lead to the successful execution of a socialization program. These principles are:

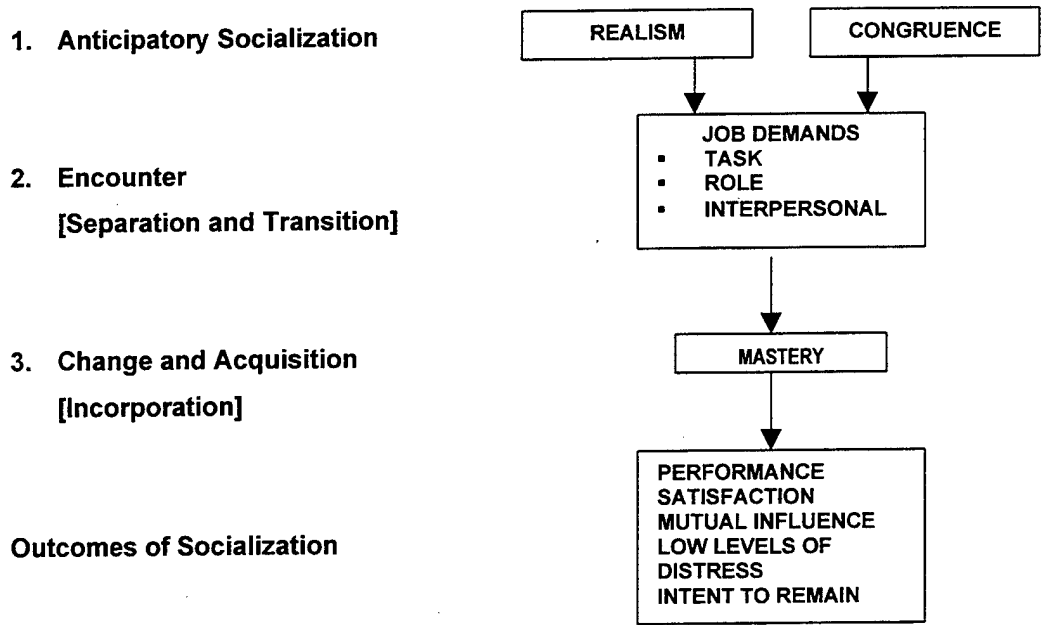
1. Individual participants in a socialization program progress through psychological stages that should be facilitated by a coherent strategy that incorporates specific standards and ceremonial rites of passages.
2. Socialization tactics can and should correspond with the desired organizational outcomes.
3. Individual expectations, capabilities, and characteristics have a tremendous impact on how the individual responds to the socialization experience and these variables should be incorporated into the program strategy.
4. The socialization trainer/role model is the single most influential component of the socialization process.

SOCIALIZATION PRINCIPLES APPLIED TO IET

SOCIALIZATION STAGES

The socialization process is typically described in three stages: anticipatory socialization, encounter, and change and acquisition.¹² The socialization experience follows this pattern psychologically; each stage contributing to the next, ideally providing the recruit with the tools to learn and adapt while progressing through the socialization experience. The new recruit's socialization actually begins prior to their entry into a recruiting station and ends with their graduation from IET. A model highlighting the key concerns and outcomes of the process is below.¹³

FIGURE 1: SOCIALIZATION STAGES



Anticipatory stage

The first stage, anticipatory socialization, encompasses all of the learning that takes place prior to the new recruit's first day in IET. It includes the recruit's expectations. The two key concerns at this stage are realism and congruence. Realism is the degree to which a recruit holds realistic expectations about IET, the job, and the Army. There are two types of congruence between the recruit and the Army. The first is congruence between the recruit's abilities and the demands of the job. The second is the fit between the Army's values and the recruit's values. Value congruence is particularly important for organizational culture. It is also important in terms of the recruit's adjustment. The literature suggests that newcomers whose values match the company values are more satisfied with the new job, adjust more quickly, and say they intend to remain with the firm longer.¹⁴

Unfortunately, the Army has very little influence over this stage of the socialization process. The new recruit's values and expectations are shaped by many sources within our society to include the recruiter, the media, family members, school officials, and peers. The implications of mismatches in either of these areas are significant but not insurmountable. Effective socialization programs have incorporated various strategies to mitigate these mismatches early in the encounter stage. The critical factor is to recognize that new recruits may not enter the socialization process fully prepared to accept the experiences that lay ahead of them.

Encounter stage

The second stage, encounter, is when the recruit learns the tasks associated with the job, clarify their roles, and establish new relationships in the Army. This stage begins on the first day of IET and the recruit faces task demands, role demands, and interpersonal demands during this period. During this stage, the new recruit also progresses through psychological phases referred to as separation and transition. "Unfreezing, moving away, or letting go is a necessary preliminary step in affecting change...."¹⁵ The dynamics of separation are very powerful in IET as new recruits are immediately isolated from their friends and family, typically only allowed contact through the mail for the first few weeks. Transition is described as, "an ambiguous, unstructured state of being 'betwixt and between'... During this phase initiates are sociologically naked, stripped of past identities and lacking new ones."¹⁶ New recruits can be expected to experience higher levels of stress during this period of psychological limbo. David Gottlieb in his book, *Babes in Arms*, provides some insight into the new recruit's experience. "Regardless of knowledge about the military or self-concept, each new inductee encounters some degree of trauma, remorse, and anxiety as he or she goes through the initial steps of exchanging a familiar life-style for one that is yet to be discovered."¹⁷

Task demands involve the actual work performed. Learning to perform tasks is related the organization's culture. IET is particularly interesting and potentially powerful because the new tasks encompass virtually every aspect of the recruit's life. He is taught how to dress, walk, talk, and sleep, in addition to the actual skills associated with doing their military job. The Army transmits what is important within our culture by the methods we use to teach/train these tasks and with the performance standards associated with the tasks. New recruits should learn the set of necessary technical skills to perform their job and progress to the final stage.

The recruit also faces role demands in this stage. In preparing recruits to perform their duties in their first unit of assignment, IET exposes them to the context and expectations of their role in the organization. Role clarity is the central theme. Do we expect new soldiers to operate in a clearly defined environment or do we want them to become familiar with an ambiguous environment? Do we expect new soldiers to work independently or do we expect them to work as a member of a team? The answers to these questions and many like them should influence the design of the socialization experience.

The recruit also faces interpersonal demands in this stage. "Politics, leadership style, and group pressure are interpersonal demands. Each reflect the values and assumptions that operate within the organization"¹⁸ The IET experience clearly communicates the relationship between leader and follower and it also reinforces the relationship of a new soldier within their team. The leadership style employed during IET should reinforce the Army's leadership culture for the recruit.

The second stage has powerful implications for the successful socialization of the recruit. This stage touches all developmental areas and the critical factors seem to be: first, the notion of consistency between the socialization experience and the first unit experience, and second, the importance of recognizing and facilitating the psychological progression. An effective socialization program reinforces what is important in our culture and exposes the new recruits to what they will experience once they join

their unit. Ceremonial rites of passage are extremely useful, during this and all socialization stages, for facilitating and marking progression through the process. "Organizations lose some of the socialization potential of training programs when they fail to develop them as full-fledged rites of passage."¹⁹ IET is full of opportunities to fully capitalize on this important socialization tool. "The most important cultural feature of rites of passage is that they involve more than a mere acquisition of new social position; they make and signal an essential change in the identity of the persons involved in the passage."²⁰

Change and acquisition stage

The final stage of the socialization process is "change and acquisition". "They [newcomers] become proficient at managing their tasks, clarifying and negotiating their roles, and engaging in relationships at work."²¹ The notion is that the recruit starts to perform satisfactorily for the trainer and that the recruit feels like a member of the organization. The psychological component is called incorporation and the new recruit is feeling confident and more relaxed in the environment. The end of this stage is signaled by graduation from IET. The critical factor during this stage is the new recruit's requirements and relationships should closely mirror those that they will experience in their first unit.

Socialization Outcomes

The model also highlights the general outcomes of an effective socialization process. These outcomes clearly correlate to the Army's desires for the IET graduate as expressed by General Abrams earlier in the paper.

Newcomers who are successfully socialized should exhibit good performance, high job satisfaction, and the intention to stay with the organization. In addition, they should exhibit low levels of distress symptoms. High levels of organizational commitment are also marks of successful socialization. This commitment is facilitated throughout the socialization process by the communication of values that newcomers can buy into.²²

These are the general outcomes of effective socialization programs but every organization is not the same. Some organizations value innovation and creativity while others value compliance and conformity. Socialization programs employ different tactics to accomplish different outcomes. The critical factor is that the organization must identify the desired outcomes and employ the appropriate tactics to achieve these outcomes.

SOCIALIZATION TACTICS

Various socialization tactics are employed to introduce newcomers to the culture, values, and norms of the organization. Schein describes socialization tactics by polar opposites along six different dimensions shown in Figure 2.²³

FIGURE 2: A TYPOLOGY OF SOCIALIZATION TACTICS

	<u>Institutionalized</u>	vs	<u>Individualized</u>
Context	Collective		Individual
	Formal		Informal
Content	Sequential		Random
	Fixed		Variable
Social Aspects	Serial		Disjunctive
	Divestiture		Investiture
Likely Effects	Custodial		Innovative

Organizations usually employ a combination of these tactics but the logic described by Schein suggests that the more a socialization process employs the tactics listed under one or another column, the more likely it is to produce either a custodial or innovative response. A custodial response is one in which the person being socialized subsequently performs in ways that preserve and continue the prevailing culture. An innovative response is one in which the person being socialized subsequently behaves in ways that differ from and thus could change the prevailing culture.

The socialization tactics, employed in IET as described in TRADOC Regulation 350-6, are clearly and appropriately institutionalized to achieve the desired custodial response. The tactics used in IET are collective, formal, sequential, fixed, serial, and divestiture. The definitions of each are:

1. Collective tactics take a company of new recruits through a common set of experiences as they collectively face entry into the organization.
2. Formal tactics separate those to be socialized from other members and indoctrinate them into cultural expectations with well structured programs.
3. Sequential tactics involve passing persons through well-defined steps that lead to a specific role.
4. Fixed tactics involve specific and known timetables required to complete a particular passage to a particular role.
5. Serial tactics involve using experienced members of the culture to serve as role models and otherwise groom newcomers into established role expectations.
6. Divestiture tactics are aimed at changing cultural content; they act to weaken previous identities and dilute the impact of past roles.²⁴

While these tactics appear to fit the desired outcomes of IET at the macro level, it is important to note that the individual characteristics of the new recruit play an important role in the determining the effectiveness of the socialization process.

INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS

Up to this point, most of the discussion revolves around those things that we control like the socialization strategy and tactics employed to incorporate new recruits. The new recruits and their psychological characteristics must be considered when discussing socialization outcomes. Socialization literature suggests the "structure of socialization –the tactics employed-matters, but because of differences in self-perception and experience, individuals will vary in how they respond to those tactics."²⁵ The other individual characteristics that significantly effect the outcome within an institutionalized approach are commitment and the concept of delayed versus immediate gratification.

The personal characteristics most often shown to affect socialization fall into three areas: relevant past experiences, feelings about self, and commitment. The first area includes variables that reflect past experiences that somehow prepare the individual cognitively and emotionally for the new role. These usually involve similar or comparable life events. New recruits that have recently participated in organized athletics typically adjust quickly to the rigors of IET. "A psychiatrist who studied the reaction of recruits to basic training in the U.S. Army found past experience with any remotely comparable event...to be the major factor in ameliorating the high level of stress during this period..."²⁶

The second area concerns feelings about self such as self-confidence or self-esteem. Numerous studies indicate that the self-esteem of recruits moderated the degree to which successful and competent supervisors served as role models in the recruits' learning their organizations' cultures. Low self-esteem reduced the effectiveness of the transfer process between role models and their subordinates. The individual's perceived competence directly effects the individual's stress reaction which may promote or inhibit learning.

The third area relates to the notion of individual commitment and pride. Institutionalized tactics by their very nature require a high level of individual commitment and pride. The individual experiences periods of frustration, anxiety, despair, and loss of control during the socialization process. "Two prevalent themes emerge as enlistees describe their first weeks in the Army. First, is the theme of uncertainty – not knowing what will happen next and not knowing the significance of what is happening. Intertwined with the uncertainty is the theme of a competition – a make or break game between the enlistee and the Army."²⁷ Commitment represents the willingness to endure these hardships even when they do not fully understand or agree with their purpose. Individual pride encourages the new recruit to keep trying to demonstrate their worth to the organization.

The critical factor that surfaces from an analysis of this component of the socialization process is that individual characteristics are important variables that must be understood and incorporated into the socialization strategy.

THE TRAINER/ROLE MODEL

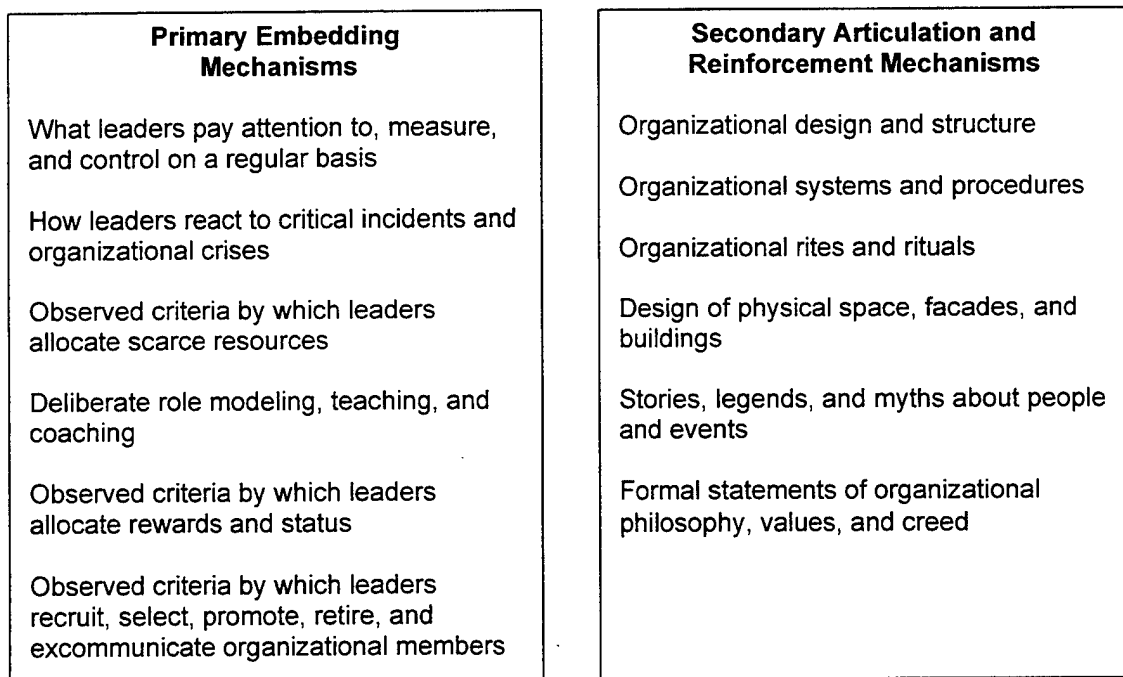
IET employs the serial tactic defined earlier as using experienced members of the culture to serve as role models and otherwise groom newcomers into established role expectations. The drill sergeant

fulfills this role in the Army's socialization process. The literature suggests that this individual is critical to the successful socialization of the newcomer into the organization because they represent every facet of the organization in the eyes of that newcomer. This individual performs three critical functions; they transmit the culture of the Army; they role model desired behaviors; they educate and train the newcomer in the required skills. These functions are obviously performed simultaneously but they represent different theoretical constructs that illustrate the tremendous power resident in this position and the complexity of this position.

Organizational Culture Transmitter

Edgar Schein is a recognized leader in the study of organizational culture and socialization. In his book, Organizational Culture and Leadership, he suggests that there are primary and secondary mechanisms that organizational leaders use to transmit the organizational culture. In the context of IET this organizational leader is the drill sergeant. "Some the mechanisms that leaders use to communicate their beliefs, values, and assumptions are conscious, deliberate actions; others are unconscious and may even be unintended."²⁸ Figure 3 highlights these mechanisms.

FIGURE 3: CULTURE-EMBEDDING MECHANISMS



"The mechanisms, as shown in figure 3, vary along several dimensions: (1) how powerful their effects are, (2) how implicit or explicit the messages conveyed are, and (3) how intentional they are."²⁹ The mechanisms identified are leader behaviors and actions that are often taken for granted by organizational leaders. Effective transmission of an organizational culture requires a coherent strategy where the twelve mechanisms are linked by a shared understanding of the culture by the drill sergeant and an understanding of how these behaviors and actions transmit the culture. The drill sergeant can

significantly enhance their ability to transmit the Army's culture if they shape their behaviors and actions with these twelve mechanisms in mind.

Role Model

Resident in many of the mechanisms discussed above is the notion that the drill sergeant's behaviors are observed by the new recruit. This is an important point because the power of effective role modeling goes beyond the traditional concept of modeling only those behaviors that we want subordinates to emulate. Role modeling in this fashion encompasses the full range of observable behaviors. The drill sergeant should understand the dynamics of their role in transmitting the Army's culture and how their actions and behavior support this process.

The concept of being a role model for subordinates is very familiar to those in the military profession. Another noted behavioral scientist, Albert Bandura, suggests that learning through the observation of others occurs throughout society and imitative learning can be enhanced by the role model if they follow some key principles. First, the role model should reinforce that their actions are important to get the observers attention. Second, learning takes place vicariously. The role model can influence the behavior of many by working with a few. Third, role models in socialization settings are always on stage therefore; their behavior must be consistent.³⁰ Robert Gagne reinforces this concept of learning when he discusses the role model's ability to influence individual attitudes. He writes, "The human model must, of course, be someone whom the learners respect; or as some writers would have it, someone with whom they can identify. In addition, desirable characteristics of the model are to be perceived as credible and powerful."³¹

Role models are extremely important to the socialization process but their impact can be positive or negative. Another author describes the negative consequences of role models not fully supporting the socialization process. "If the veteran employees are cynical or angry with the organization, the new employee will be hit with a very negative view of the company, and it is being delivered in the most powerful communication medium."³² Role modeling will take place during the socialization process, but the organization must attempt to shape the model's behavior to have a positive impact on the process.

Educator and Trainer

The final function of educator and trainer also draws on some important theoretical constructs. The field of educational psychology highlights that instructional techniques should vary based on the desired educational outcome. "The best way to design instruction is to work backwards from its expected outcomes."³³ The techniques employed to educate an individual on developing respect for others should be different than those employed to educate an individual soldier on how to clean a M16 weapon. The literature points to the need to design educational/training experiences based on these desired outcomes.

The trainer/role model's performance in the socialization process is a determining factor in the success of the program. IET requires drill sergeants to perform all these functions and more. This requires the drill sergeant to understand and integrate the three functions discussed above.

EVALUATING IET AS A SOCIALIZATION PROCESS

The potential relationship between the four key socialization principles and IET is clear, but are these principles truly incorporated into the IET socialization strategy. The final portion of this paper addresses this question by highlighting four areas. First, the formal guidance that describes the socialization strategy and tactics employed in IET. Second, the specified output goals and their relationship to the socialization strategy and tactics. Third, new recruits' individual characteristics and the organization's attempt to incorporate these characteristics into the socialization strategy. Finally, the preparation/training of the drill sergeant to perform their critical role in the socialization process. These four areas enable me to demonstrate that IET is a very good socialization program, but there is room for improvement.

FORMAL GUIDANCE

The execution guidance for IET is contained in primarily two documents, TRADOC Regulation 350-6, Initial Entry Training Policies and Administration, and TRADOC Training Note 99-1, Transforming Citizens to Soldiers. TRADOC Regulation 350-6 is a very comprehensive, ninety five page document that provides everything from general philosophy to detailed implementing instructions. Training Note 99-1 supplements TRADOC Regulation 350-6 and describes the critical elements and standards for IET as prescribed by the TRADOC commander for all personnel involved in the IET process. This pamphlet essentially reinforces the commander's overarching philosophy for the execution of IET. These two documents describe a coherent socialization strategy that very clearly recognizes that individual participants in a socialization program progress through psychological stages that are best facilitated by specific performance standards and ceremonial rites of passages.

The initial guidance in TRADOC Regulation 350-6 provides the reader with the general strategy for transforming civilians into technically and tactically competent soldiers.

This transformation from civilian to soldier is accomplished during a five-phased "Soldierization" process which begins with a soldier's arrival at the reception battalion and ends with the awarding of a MOS upon completion of IET. By definition, soldierization is a tough, comprehensive process which totally immerses a IET soldier in a positive environment established by active, involved leadership. This environment sets high standards, provides positive role models, and uses every training opportunity to reinforce basic soldier skills.³⁴

This guidance introduces the notion of phases, role models, and specific performance standards. The regulation provides detailed guidance in each of these areas establishing the conditions for successful socialization.

The direction provided to facilitate the new recruit's progression through the psychological stages of socialization is excellent.

The concept of phasing and associated goals was established to provide intermediate objectives that give common direction and serve as milestones for IET soldiers during IET. The training cadre informs IET soldiers of the goals and standards for each phase of training. IET soldiers then know what direction to work towards and generally what effort must be applied to achieve the goals. Movement from each phase is viewed as a

"gate" or "passage" for each soldier. The training cadre evaluates each soldier against the desired standards for each pass before advancing to the next phase.³⁵

The regulation goes on to discuss each phase, the purpose of each phase, and the associated standards by phase. Successful completion of each stage is marked by a streamer and a ceremony or event. Progression through each stage is also rewarded by the restoration of privileges that eventually replicate those privileges afforded a soldier in their first duty unit.

The regulation also describes the socialization environment by providing specific guidance to IET cadre serving as trainer/role model.

Cadre will train their soldiers by building on and affirming their strengths and shoring up their weaknesses. It is imperative that unit cadre establish high standards of performance and insist their soldiers meet those standards. It then becomes incumbent on the cadre to coach, mentor, and assist their soldiers in meeting the standards through performance counseling and phase goal setting. This insist/assist philosophy must be balanced during implementation....The leadership climate in IET must be positive. Leaders at all levels will demonstrate a genuine concern for the mission and the welfare of the individual soldier. Importance of the individual soldier to the Army and to the nation must be highlighted throughout the entire IET process.³⁶

The environment described can effectively present the new recruit with an appropriate understanding of the task demands, role clarity, and their relationship within the organization. This description also appears to push the cadre toward reinforcing the important cultural artifacts like the importance of the individual soldier to their leaders.

The only phase of the socialization process not effectively addressed in either TRADOC Regulation 350-6 or Training Note 99-1 is the anticipatory stage. This is understandable since the Army has very little control over this stage. A discussion of this stage and the effects of the outcomes of this stage have on the new recruit upon entry to IET would benefit those involved in executing the first few weeks of IET.

The regulation and training note discuss in some detail the specific performance standards associated with each phase of training/socialization to include the desired outcomes of the socialization process. Another principle applicable to successful socialization programs is the match between specific socialization tactics and the goals of the program.

OUTPUT GOALS

What socialization response is the Army seeking? What attributes do we want the IET graduate to possess upon graduation? These are critical questions because it is impossible to design and execute an effective socialization process without this information just as it is impossible to design any process if you do not understand what you want it to produce. Understanding these attributes or process outcomes and their characteristics enables us to apply the most effective socialization tactics. TRADOC Regulation 350-6 outlines a program that employs the tactics generally associated with institutional socialization programs as described earlier. These tactics generate a custodial response, which is exactly what the Army desires.

While the general socialization tactics appear to match the desired outcomes, the specific performance standards associated with each phase and the final attributes associated with the completion of IET pose an interesting challenge. General Abrams writes, "The end we seek is to provide soldiers who demonstrate commitment to service of their country, who possess character based on Army values, technical skills, and warrior spirit."³⁷ He describes some all encompassing and very challenging goals that potentially require very different developmental/training approaches. The approaches vary because the training methods employed to achieve Basic Rifle Marksmanship proficiency are very different than the methods employed to inculcate respect for the Army's values. These goals also require objective and/or subjective assessment by the trainer to determine successful attainment by the new recruit. These two areas require additional attention in IET if we want to maximize the effectiveness of the socialization process.

The TRADOC commander delineates the desired attributes very well in two documents published to guide his IET leaders. TRADOC Regulation 350-6, Initial Entry Training Policies and Administration, communicate the desired outcomes of IET using six objectives.

1. Inculcate in the new trainee an understanding and respect for the Army's seven core values... (Character)
2. Promote and instill in the new IET soldier the highest degree of individual responsibility, self-discipline, and self-respect. (Emotional)
3. Promote and instill in every new IET soldier the professional pride, dignity, and bearing associated with being a soldier in the United States Army. This includes inculcation of the tenets of their enlistment obligation, the Oath of Enlistment, and the Soldier's Creed. (Emotional)
4. Develop in the new soldier the knowledge, understanding, and appreciation of Army customs, heritage, and traditions. (Character)
5. Provide each new soldier with the knowledge, skills, and task proficiency to immediately contribute to the unit's mission and survive on the battlefield. (Military Skills)
6. Provide the Army with mentally and physically fit soldiers who are capable of performing their duties in an extended stress atmosphere.³⁸ (Physical)

TRADOC Training Note 99-1, Transforming Citizens to Soldiers, takes a little different but equally effective approach to specifying the desired outcomes. The TRADOC commander uses a knowledge, skills, and attributes framework similar to the "Be, Know, Do" paradigm present in the Army's leadership manuals. "The following represents the minimum skills, knowledge, and attributes required of Army trainees at completion of basic training:

Knowledge (understand the following concepts)

- Chain of command (Military Skills)
- Orders (Military Skills)
- Army values (Character)

- Teamwork (Emotional)
- Military law (Military Skills)
- Army tradition and heritage (Character)
- Army discipline (Emotional)
- Army warrior ethos-the focused will to win. The will to seek out and overcome obstacles to successful mission completion
- Standing Operating Procedures (Military Skills)
- Army leadership-Be, Know, Do (Military Skills)
- The proper wear of Army uniforms (Military Skills)
- Maintenance principles for individual weapons and equipment (Military Skills)
- Understand basic individual infantry tactics (Military Skills)
- Army customs and Courtesies (Military Skills)

Skills (irrespective of day/night or weather conditions): (Military Skills)

- Qualified in basic rifle or pistol marksmanship
- Able to administer first aid under combat conditions
- Able to survive in a chemically contaminated environment
- Able to survive and operate in the field using basic field sanitation skills
- Able to move between points using basic map reading and land navigation techniques
- Able to fight in hand-to-hand combat
- Able to throw a hand grenade into an enemy target
- Able to employ a basic anti-tank weapon
- Able to prepare individual fighting positions
- Able to understand basic radio-telephone communications procedures

Attributes:

- Physically fit (Physical)
- Demonstrate Army values (Character)
- Treat all with dignity and respect (Character)
- Demonstrate a rudimentary warrior ethos-the focused will to win (Emotional)
- Confident in self and team (Emotional)
- Be a member of the team (Emotional)
- Self-disciplined (Emotional)
- Capable of demonstrating initiative (Emotional)
- Capable of problem solving (Intellectual)
- Able to handle physical and mental stress (Physical)
- Motivated to serve³⁹ (Emotional)

The desired outcomes are grouped into developmental areas for the purpose of this analysis. General Abrams alludes to these areas in his training note. "IET must focus on developing four distinct aspects of a young man or woman who desires to become an Army soldier-commitment, skill, character, and warrior spirit."⁴⁰ We develop the soldier's military, physical, and intellectual skills while also focusing on their individual character and emotional characteristics. Grouping the desired outcomes in this manner is risky because it does oversimplify the dynamics of the socialization process. These areas do not develop independent of each other, instead they each influence the other over the course of IET. Organizing the desired outcomes in this manner facilitates an effective yet brief analysis of the socialization process.

Both versions of the TRADOC commander's guidance are included because they provide a detailed description of the desired outcome and they also illustrate the all encompassing and complex nature of the tasks presented to the IET trainer. Each component potentially requires a different training technique or developmental experience to achieve the desired outcome. General Abrams uses terms like develop, instill, inculcate, and train instead of relying solely on the word train when describing the desired outcomes of Initial Entry Training. I suggest that these words have very different meanings but they are often used interchangeably within the IET community. The word "train" relates more to the temporary learning of a skill or competency, while the words "develop, inculcate, instill" suggests a more permanent developmental effect on the whole person.

The skilled military trainer may or may not have the necessary skills to be equally proficient in developing the new recruit in all developmental areas. The IET community recently responded to this challenge in the physical development area by adding Master Fitness Training to the curriculum of drill sergeant school in an attempt to enhance the drill sergeant's skills in this area. The logic that brought this recent change should be applied across all developmental areas to ensure the trainer's are fully prepared to execute the socialization program.

The developmental areas are identified, but how do we measure or test to ensure that an IET soldier meets some specified standard prior to graduation. Is there objective evidence that we can use to determine if the soldier is prepared to assume their position in a unit? The military, physical, and intellectual skill development areas are more easily measured through objective means while the character and emotional areas represent more subjective evaluations. This often frustrates and hinders the IET community because, if it is difficult to measure or quantify then it is difficult to determine if the successes or failures are the responsibility of the individual soldier or the process. An important determination when trying to produce the best soldier we can. The ultimate responsibility for determining success or failure in these areas rests very appropriately with the subjective judgement of the trainers. If the standards are not defined, it is difficult to achieve standardization unless the trainer is properly prepared to work with this type of assessment process. The trainer's judgement in this area must be developed.

In summary, the socialization tactics employed by IET will produce the desired custodial outcome in the new recruit. The necessary fine-tuning within the actual execution of these tactics focuses more on the nature of the specific outcomes as described by General Abrams. The five developmental areas have unique requirements that understandably challenge the socialization process. The trainer's knowledge and expertise in each area should be enhanced so that they can properly execute the developmental strategy and effectively judge the performance of soldier's in all areas.

NEW RECRUIT CHARACTERISTICS

While TRADOC effectively articulates the desired attributes of the IET graduate, it is more problematic determining entry-level characteristics of the new recruit. The military entrance screening process currently assesses mental aptitude, physical health, and moral character through a series of tests, examinations, and record checks. This process effectively eliminates a portion of the recruit candidates that appear to have limited potential to contribute to the Army, but it provides very little help for the IET trainer in forming a clear understanding of the strengths and weakness within each developmental area. The military, physical, and intellectual areas are easily assessed upon arrival at the IET installation but the character and emotional areas pose similar challenges to those described above. IET trainers respond to this challenge by making assumptions about the new recruit's attributes in these areas based on their personal observations, peer experiences, and in some cases memories of themselves at this point in their career. Is this sufficient if we want to ensure that IET is effectively socializing these new recruits?

This is not sufficient because today's recruits differ from the recruits from five, ten, and fifteen years ago. Youths vary over the years based on the dynamics and conditions within our society. The Army Research Institute conducted a study in 1996 attempting to correlate attrition statistics with enlistment tests. The researcher writes that, "recruits are usually regarded as a given, the raw material to be turned into competent soldiers. But the nature of the raw material is far from being a given. It varies greatly over time."⁴¹ We can not control what happens in society but we can study society and the young people that are products of this society and attempt to formulate a more comprehensive assessment based on current research. Current information in these areas is critical for the effective design and execution of the socialization process.

We can form a picture of the new recruit using a combination of methods. The methods are obviously easier in the military, intellectual, and physical skill developmental areas. For the purpose of this analysis, I will not discuss these areas in depth other than making the general observation that IET effectively accounts for entry level individual characteristics in the socialization process. The value of this portion comes from attempting to understand the entry-level attributes in the character and emotional developmental areas. These two areas impact tremendously on how the individual responds to the socialization process and I suggest that we do not adequately understand nor account for these characteristics in the strategy.

Who are these new recruits? Why do they join the military and what do they expect to get from the military? Important questions that frame the type of information IET trainers need. One researcher offers this description based on his work with the Marine Corps.

With a few exceptions, they are drawn from the 39 per cent of young American males who don't attend college, and so live on the wrong side of the widening gap between the earnings of high school graduates and college graduates. To a surprising degree, they have been living part-time lives- working part time, going to community college part time (and getting failing grades), staying dazed on drugs and alcohol part time.⁴²

He does not paint a very pretty picture but his research highlights the idea that today's new recruit ... has had different experiences that have shaped them in ways that we do not fully understand.

Social scientist have provided some general characteristics of today's youth that highlight the notion that the new recruit might enter IET with a view of the world that differs from what the NCO/trainer possessed when they entered the military. "Generation "X" has evolved in dramatically different ways than previous generations. What motivated past generations is far different than what motivates this new breed."⁴³ This generation is what most adults refer to as the "me" generation. What's in it for me? "They [today's youth] look upon a job as temporary instead of as a career, partly because they want to keep their options open. They are always looking to jump ship when they can upgrade their situation."⁴⁴ It also notes that this generation generally distrusts authority. "Authority figures and bosses are an anomaly to X'ers. Their parents often weren't around to tell them what to do or were too soft with discipline. They don't like to take orders."⁴⁵ The literature also suggests that this generation may have a difficult time enduring hardships to obtain a long term goal. "X'ers have come to expect a whole lot for nothing. They have a strong propensity for instant gratification, wanting it all and wanting it fast."⁴⁶ With this as a generalization about the youth market that holds our recruits. What about those that volunteer for military service?

A group of researchers from the Rand corporation analyzed data collected from high school students about their intentions to join the military. These researchers predict that "persons initially expressing negative intentions account for two-thirds to three-fourths of the enlistees."⁴⁷ Why did they change their mind? I suggest that other doors or options were closed to them, whether it was college or other job opportunities. Last year, 67% of the high school seniors entered college. Who doesn't go to college and why? In some respects many of these new recruits have failed along the way when compared to their peers and this impacts on their confidence or self-esteem.

Today, about 30% of our recruits come from homes without fathers. Literature in this area predicts that "the 'mom only' recruits will come without the beneficial effects of the two parent environment. Compared to similar youth from two parent house holds, they will have somewhat lower test scores, poorer grades, more emotional baggage and be less disciplined."⁴⁸ "Home Trainin - That humble phrase probably covers a lot of what children of the 1990's are missing-those behaviors and values, instilled mostly at home, that help social situations to work smoothly."⁴⁹

Social scientist predict this trend will continue and "the Army of 2010 will draw over half of its recruits from the ranks of the fatherless."⁵⁰ This demographic has tremendous implications for the trainers in IET. "The recruits will probably look to non-commissioned to meet this [father substitute/mentor] need. To the extent these Army leaders succeed in modeling an effective, realistic masculinity, the Army can reduce some of the problems associated with a predominantly 'fatherless' force."⁵¹

About 45% of the Army's recruits have direct family members in the military. The others have had very little contact with the military and really have no idea what they have committed 3 to 4 years of their life too. It is often very difficult for this portion to correlate their Initial Entry Training to the long term goal of being a soldier in a unit.

Today's recruits typically stop playing organized sports before high school. In general, the recruit is less physical or has been required to perform fewer physical tasks throughout their adolescent period. The benefits of participating in sports such as self-esteem, teamwork, and mental toughness are generally accepted as potential outcomes from these experiences. The very knowledge that physical pain from exercise or exertion does not necessarily mean permanent injury is foreign to many of our recruits. IET cadre refer to these soldiers as part of the "Nintendo Generation"

I have framed a pretty gloomy generalization of the new recruit in the character and emotional areas that have some significant socialization strategy implications. While, I do not pretend to know how to fully incorporate these characteristics into the socialization process, I do feel that the IET cadre should be provided this information. In many respects, these characteristics account for the new recruit's responses to the socialization process. Armed with this information, the drill sergeant's ability to shape and mitigate these responses would be enhanced. At a minimum these areas certainly merit further analysis and development with a view toward developing the strategy that builds commitment, self-esteem, and reinforce character early in the socialization experience.

PREPARING/TRAINING THE DRILL SERGEANT

The final principle of effective socialization programs relates to the critical role of the drill sergeant in IET. General Abrams writes,

The drill sergeant is the heart and soul of initial entry training and we must ensure that we have properly trained and motivated drill sergeants to do their jobs. The relationship between the drill sergeant and the trainee is unique. We need to capitalize on that relationship and prepare drill sergeants to be the pivotal force in the trainee's initial entry training. An investment in drill sergeants is an investment in better-trained soldiers.⁵²

General Abrams obviously understands the importance of preparing drill sergeants for their role in IET. Training Note 99-1 also prescribes a comprehensive list of the desired knowledge, skills, and attributes of the drill sergeant. This list captures the essence of a portion of the key functions performed by the trainer/role model in the socialization process. Requirements such as, "understands the importance of setting the example and role modeling in shaping and building soldiers; personifies the warrior ethos- be a role model 24 hours a day; teach, mentor, coach, counselor – IAW FM 22-100", are a small sample of

the skills and attributes described by General Abrams. Can we do more to prepare the drill sergeant for their critical role? I suggest that we can and must do more to prepare them for their complex set of requirements in the socialization process.

How does the Army select and prepare drill sergeants? The Army selects drill sergeants based on demonstrated performance in leadership positions and the recommendation of commanders. The drill sergeant's preparation begins when they enter the army and continues through the completion of their first cycle with new recruits. The average drill sergeant has served in the army for twelve years prior to selection and they have served in various leadership positions within their Military Occupational Specialty. They have successfully completed Initial Entry Training, so they have first hand experience on one end of the socialization process. They have also progressed through the Army's Non-commissioned Officer Education System consisting of the Primary Leadership Development Course, Basic Non-commissioned Course, and some will have attended Advanced Non-Commissioned Officer's Course. They have demonstrated leader skills and they should be proficient in all the tasks associated with being an effective army leader.

Drill Sergeant School is the final step for these proven army leaders. Does this school adequately prepare the drill sergeant for the complexities of their role in the socialization process? A review of the program of instruction clearly communicates that the major emphasis is on reinforcing leader and training skills. The program of instruction requires about 380 hours of instruction concentrated in twelve major subject areas.⁵³ These are:

- Human Relations 11.5 hours
- Leadership 46 hours
- Counseling 4.5 hours
- Fitness Training 110 hours
- Weapons Training 45.5 hours
- Drill and Ceremonies 80 hours
- Methods of Instruction 18 hours
- Hand Grenades 4 hours
- Combatives 24 hours
- General Subjects 15.5 hours
- Gender Integrated Training 2 hours
- Tactical Training 16 hours

82 of the 380 hours are devoted to subject areas that appear to correlate with developing the drill sergeant's leadership knowledge and skills. The remaining hours are devoted to teaching and certifying the drill sergeant as an instructor/trainer on various military skills. While each of these are very important, the curriculum does not appear to include any detailed discussion of some of the important theoretical constructs discussed throughout this paper.

The drill sergeant's ability to enhance the socialization experience for the new recruit generates first from their understanding of the process itself. We should develop the drill sergeant's understanding of the complex nature of organizational socialization. Within this framework, the drill sergeant should also be given a broader understanding of the new recruit's individual characteristics and the probable impact of these characteristics on the new recruit's responses to the process. The drill sergeant's understanding and ability to transmit the Army's culture can be enhanced by developing their understanding of Schein's typology for transmitting organizational culture and the principles outlined by Bandura for effective role models. The drill sergeant's proficiency as trainer, teacher, and developer can be enhanced through a more detailed discussion of the principles of educational design. In general, the drill sergeant needs to be exposed to these subjects so they can draw on this knowledge when attempting to accomplish their objectives in all five developmental areas.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

Initial Entry Training is and will continue to be an extremely powerful socialization experience that can be enhanced through a more stringent application of some basic socialization principles. This paper is not calling for wholesale changes in the structure or the methodology. In fact, the strategy and structure described in TRADOC Regulation 350-6 and Training Note 99-1 appear to be right on target. But, viewing IET from an organizational socialization perspective does uncover some areas that merit further attention if we are truly serious about reducing first term attrition rates in the Army. These recommendations are offered to enhance the IET experience by truly focussing every cadre member on the socialization mission.

- The Army should fully embrace and incorporate all the principles of organizational socialization in the execution of IET. The requirements for effective socialization go far beyond the current training management approach to IET. This approach to IET will enable the leadership to truly focus their energies on developing the understanding and skills necessary to maximize the benefits of this powerful experience.
- The Army should attempt to shape the anticipatory socialization stage through recruiters, media, and school officials to better prepare the new recruit for the IET experience. Initial new recruit experiences in the Military Entrance Processing Station and the Reception Battalion should also continue to prepare the new recruit for their IET experience. The goal should be to shape the new recruit's mental image of the first few days in their first unit.
- The socialization strategy and tactics should be periodically reviewed to ensure that the individual's entry characteristics are properly incorporated into the strategy especially during the encounter stage. Individual characteristics have a profound impact on the new recruit's willingness and ability to internalize the socialization experience. Low individual confidence is a good example of a characteristic that would merit modifying the socialization strategy. The training plan can be adjusted to address this issue by moving specific confidence building experiences early in the training cycle.

- The drill sergeant should receive instruction on the principles of socialization, organizational culture, role modeling, and educational design in addition to the preparation already provided during drill sergeant school to better prepare them for complex role they perform in the socialization program. This instruction should be geared toward expanding the drill sergeant's awareness of the assortment of powerful tools available to them for enhancing the socialization experience.

This paper takes a close look at IET through an organizational behavior lens attempting to better understand the dynamics of organizational socialization with the ultimate goal of reducing first term attrition in the Army. I have applied some basic socialization principles to IET looking for opportunities to improve our process and I believe there are areas that can be enhanced to accomplish the objective prescribed by General Abrams. "The end we seek is to provide soldiers who demonstrate commitment to service of their country, who possess character based on Army values, technical skills, and warrior spirit. It is these capabilities that enable the soldier to successfully complete their initial enlistment as part of a well trained operational army unit."⁵⁴ Fully embracing the tenets of organizational socialization will only enhance our ability to produce the type of soldiers with the commitment and desire to serve our nation in the twenty-first century.

WORD COUNT = 9001

ENDNOTES

¹ Ralph E. Allison, Jr., Analysis of First-Term Army Attrition (Carlisle Barracks, U.S. Army War College, 21 April 1999), 6.

² Ibid, 15.

³ Eric Shinseki, U.S. Army Chief of Staff. "CSA's Manning Task Force Implementation Message," Message to Army Leadership (Washington, D.C., 17 October 1999), 3.

⁴ Harrison M. Trice and Janice M. Beyer, The Cultures of Work Organizations (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1993), 137.

⁵ U.S. Department of the Army, Transforming Citizens to Soldiers, TRADOC Training Note 99-1 (Ft Monroe: U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, April 1999), 1.

⁶ U.S. Department of the Army. "U.S. Army Infantry Training Brigade Attrition Statistics" (Ft Benning: U.S. Army Infantry Training Center, December 1999)

⁷ Barry M. Shaw, ed. Psychological Foundations of Organizational Behavior, 2nd ed. (Palo Alto: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1983), 192.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Debra L. Nelson and James Campbell Quick, Organizational Behavior: Foundations, Realities, and Challenges (St Paul: West Publishing Company, 1997), 487.

¹⁰ U.S. Department of the Army, Transforming Citizens to Soldiers, 2.

¹¹ U.S. Department of the Army, Initial Entry Training (IET) Policies and Administration, TRADOC Regulation 350-6 (Ft Monroe: U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, 30 November 1998), 4.

¹² Nelson, 487.

¹³ Ibid

¹⁴ Ibid

¹⁵ Trice, 140.

¹⁶ Ibid, 142.

¹⁷ David Gottlieb, Babes in Arms: Youth in the Army (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, Inc., 1980), 43.

¹⁸ Nelson, 488.

¹⁹ Trice, 139.

²⁰ Ibid

²¹ Nelson, 488.

²² Nelson, 488.

²³ Trice, 132.

²⁴ Ibid

²⁵ Ibid, 137.

²⁶ Ibid, 136.

²⁷ Gottlieb, 46.

²⁸ Edgar H. Schein, Organizational Culture and Leadership. 2nd ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Inc., 1992), 229.

²⁹ Ibid, 231.

³⁰ William C. Crain Theories of Development: Concepts and Applications. 2nd ed. (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1985), 229.

³¹ Robert M. Gagne, Leslie J. Briggs, and Walter W. Wager, Principles of Instructional Design, 3rd ed. (San Francisco: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, Inc., 1988), 88.

³² Peg C. Neuhauser, Corporate Legends and Lore: The Power of Storytelling as a Management Tool (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1993), 86.

³³ Gagne, 39.

³⁴ U.S. Department of the Army, Initial Entry Training (IET) Policies and Administration, 5.

³⁵ Ibid, 10.

³⁶ U.S. Department of the Army, Initial Entry Training (IET) Policies and Administration, 15.

³⁷ U.S. Department of the Army, Transforming Citizens to Soldiers, 3.

³⁸ U.S. Department of the Army, Initial Entry Training (IET) Policies and Administration, 6.

³⁹ U.S. Department of the Army, Transforming Citizens to Soldiers, 4-6.

⁴⁰ Ibid, 3.

⁴¹ Lola M. Zook, Soldier Selection: Past, Present, and Future (Alexandria: U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences. February 1996), 2.

⁴² Thomas E. Ricks Making the Corps (New York: Touchstone, 1997), 30.

⁴³ Bob Losyk "Generation X: What They Think and What They Plan to Do," The Futurist (March-April 1997), 44.

⁴⁴ Ibid, 41.

⁴⁵ Ibid, 42.

⁴⁶ Ibid

⁴⁷ Beth J. Asch and Bruce R. Orvis. Recent Recruiting Trends and their Implications: Preliminary Analysis and Recommendations (Santa Monica: Rand Corporation, 1994), 9.

⁴⁸ Robert L. Phillips and Maxwell R. Thurman, eds. Future Soldiers and the Quality Imperative: The Army 2010 Conference (Fort Knox: The U.S. Army Recruiting Command, 1995), 255.

⁴⁹ Ibid, 258.

⁵⁰ Ibid, 254.

⁵¹ Ibid, 259.

⁵² U.S. Department of the Army, Transforming Citizens to Soldiers, 7.

⁵³ U.S. Department of the Army. "U.S. Army Drill Sergeant School POI Overview" (Ft Benning: U.S. Army Infantry Training Center, 1 December 1999)

⁵⁴ U.S. Department of the Army, Transforming Citizens to Soldiers, 3.

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