

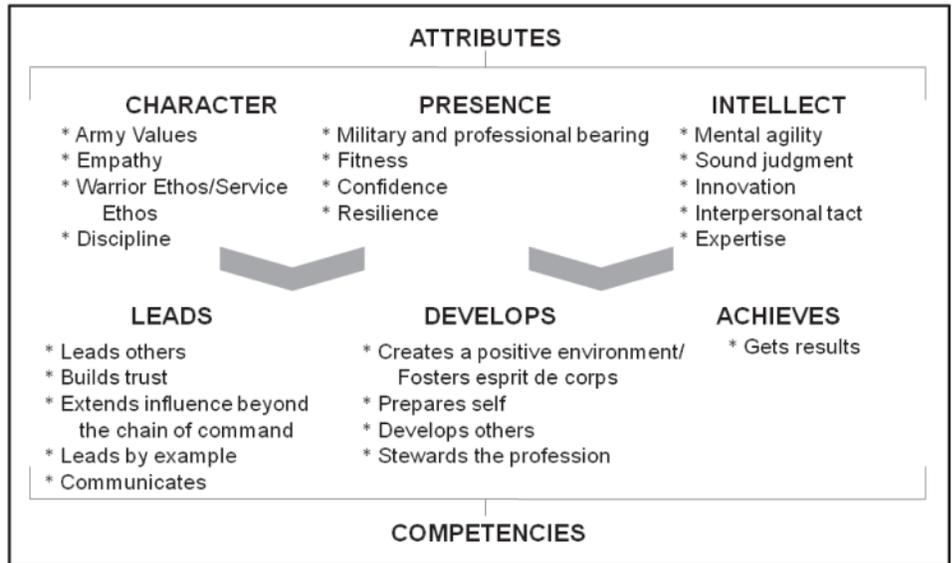
LEADER DEVELOPMENT AT THE ORGANIZATIONAL LEVEL

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In 2013, Secretary of the Army John McHugh, Chief of Staff of the Army GEN Raymond T. Odierno, and Sergeant Major of the Army Raymond F. Chandler III all endorsed the Army Leader Development Strategy (ALDS) which makes clear that leader development is the *sine qua non* for a successful present and future force.¹ That ethos carries through in Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 6-22, *Army Leadership*, which identifies “develops” among leader competencies in the Leadership Requirements Model. Thus, it’s patently clear that the Army is dedicated to leader development as evidenced by the focus it receives from the very highest levels because, after all, organizations do well what the boss declares as important. The ALDS describes leader development as

a responsibility that is shared by the institutional Army, the operational force, and the individual. It further describes this in an ends-ways-means construct that describes training, education, and experience across the institutional, operational, and individual domains.² But the ALDS is short on the “how.” How do we do leader development at the organizational level?

Successful commanders develop leaders. It’s an



ADP 6-22

Figure 1 — Army Leadership Requirements Model

investment in the future and part of the stewardship role to which all commanders are beholden. We all strive to constantly improve our organizations with the goal of achieving mission excellence as well as passing on a formation that is better than the one we inherited. To this end, many organizations employ qualification programs (for example, spur rides in cavalry units and prop blasts in Airborne formations). These are developmental in that they require some level of certification. Each leader must successfully perform a myriad of mission and unit-specific tasks that grant them entrée into the ranks of the accepted. These programs are of great benefit because they help keep the organization operating within the band of excellence and are fundamentally developmental but tend to be narrowly focused on the competencies required for excellence at the specific organization. If properly executed, staff rides are also excellent, albeit resource intensive, development



The command historian and chief public affairs officer for the Army Reserve’s 99th Regional Support Command leads Soldiers and civilian employees in learning about the American Revolution’s Second Battle of Trenton and Battle of Princeton during a staff ride in western New Jersey on 17 November 2012.

Photo by SGT Salvatore Ottaviano

opportunities that can be employed to great effect at organizational level. Staff rides have the advantage of a more expansive professional focus which addresses the ALDS's priority to broaden leaders by stretching them professionally and intellectually by requiring them to operate beyond their core competencies. This enhances their value to the Army at large. Other organizations focus less on the unit and more on the individual by utilizing professional reading programs that are developmental at the Soldier level but only derive tangential benefit to the unit.

At the Command and General Staff College (CGSC), the Department of Command and Leadership offers an Advanced Application Course entitled "Organizational Leadership Case Studies" that can be easily and inexpensively adapted by a battalion or brigade commander/command team to work at organizational level.³ The course, authored by Dr. Tom Bradbeer, is purpose designed for majors at the CGSC, using popular films as leadership case studies. The focus is on organizational leadership and requires the officers to "... evaluate the leadership competencies of organizational-level commanders that weighed heavily on the outcomes of their decision making in combat or preparing for combat with the intent of deducing implications that relate to your future roles as an organizational leader in full spectrum operations."⁴ The library of films used for this course totals 18 and includes *Glory*, *Breaker Morant*, *The Lost Battalion*, *A Bridge Too Far*, and *A Bright Shining Lie* among others (see Figure 2). Each officer is required to watch the film individually and conduct some background reading before coming together in a group to discuss the protagonists as they deal with the problems within their organizations and what challenges that unit must confront to accomplish its mission. Not a history course, each session is inaugurated by a 15-20 minute overview that puts the case study into context for application by the assembled leaders. To give some structure to the discussions, we pose the following questions, in various formats, for each case study:

1) In each case study, there are at least two main protagonists that are in conflict with one another. What are their purpose, mission, and anticipated endstate?

2) What Army values are in conflict with one another? Explain?

3) Identify at least three competencies or attributes from the Leadership Requirements Model that the protagonists demonstrated as organizational-level leaders.

4) If the organizational-level leader was successful, explain why?

5) If the organizational-level leader failed, explain why?

6) Identify and explain the environment, culture, and climate you observed in the case study.

Using this construct, with just a DVD (generally available from the post library) and access to the internet for some background reading, an organization's leaders can gather to perform a case-study analysis of a complex organization facing a perplexing problem(s). Leveraging the LRM, the discussion leader can initiate and vector the discussion among the assembled leaders. For example, in the case of

Figure 2 — Library of Films Used in Organizational Leadership Case Studies course

- *Glory* (U.S. Civil War) directed by Edward Zwick, 1989
- *Breaker Morant* (Anglo-Boer War 1899-1902) directed by Bruce Beresford, 1980
- *The Lost Battalion* (WWI, Meuse-Argonne Campaign, 1918) directed by Russell Mulcahy, 2001
- *The Paths of Glory* (WWI, French Army, 1916-1917) directed by Stanley Kubrick, 1957
- *Lawrence of Arabia* (British Army in Palestine, 1917-1918) directed by David Lean, 1962
- *The Court-Martial of Billy Mitchell* (Inter-War period, 1919-1925) directed by Otto Preminger, 1955
- *Midway* (WWII, U.S. Navy in the Pacific, June 1942) directed by Jack Smight, 1976
- *The Devil's Brigade* (WWII, Special Forces in Italy, 1943-44) directed by Andrew V. McLaglen, 1968
- *The Enemy Below* (WWII, U-Boat Campaign, 1943-44) directed by Dick Powell, 1957
- *A Bridge Too Far* (Allied Airborne Operations, European Theater, 1944) directed by Richard Attenborough, 1977
- *MacArthur* (WWII and Korea, 1942-1951) directed by Joseph Sargent, 1977
- *Patton* (WWII, Africa and European Theaters, 1942-1945) directed by Franklin J. Schaffner, 1970
- *Ike: Countdown to D-Day* (WWII, Normandy Invasion, 1944) directed by Robert Harmon, 2004
- *The Battle of Algiers* (Algerian War of Independence, 1954-1962) directed by Gillo Pontecorvo, 1966
- *Lost Command* (French Army in Indo-China and Algeria, 1954-1962) directed by Mark Robson, 1966
- *A Bright Shining Lie* (American Advisors in Vietnam, 1962-1972) directed by Terry George, 1998
- *K-19: The Widowmaker* (The Cold War, Soviet submarine operations, 1957-1987) directed by Kathryn Bigelow, 2002
- *Bloody Sunday* (British Army in Northern Ireland, 1972) directed by Paul Greengrass, 2002

The Lost Battalion, the battalion commander finds himself deep in enemy territory in a communication blackout, cut off from contact with units that were supposed to be on his flanks. With dwindling resources and no anticipated resupply, facing a numerically superior enemy, the commander must hold his position in order to meet his mission requirements. After watching the film, the leaders can assess the commander's ability to:

- Be a leader with presence, demonstrating resilience that contributes to the unit's mental and physical well-being and morale
- Create a positive environment in the face of daunting odds
- Communicate a vision that motivates others to achieve the desired endstate

- Lead by example by demonstrating a competent and confident approach to the high-pressure conditions of combat

- Lead others by example and by direction

- Prepare self; self-aware leaders are capable of anticipating and exploiting both expected and unexpected opportunities

- Get results by achieving the mission by gaining and maintaining situational awareness and situational understanding.

As the discussion unfolds, it is important to make sure that the process has relevance to the leader. Specifically, how will what we observed in this film and gleaned from the group discussion be of benefit to the individual as a leader in the future? Just as importantly, it is every leader's responsibility and duty to develop subordinate leaders. How can leaders use what was discussed to assist their subordinate leaders?

Following the discussion, each leader writes a short, single page paper, a précis, that provides a concise summary of the essential facts of the case. To ensure brevity, the leader should focus on the principal protagonist of the case study and use one attribute and one competency from the LRM as the basis for the prose. The leader can then finish up with the key reason the case study analysis will be of use in the future.

There are some potential traps that can make this approach to leader development problematical. For instance, depending upon the audience, some movies may fail to connect. Specifically, here at CGSC, we are focused on the organizational level of leadership and, as such, shy away from films that operate at the direct level. For instance *Saving Private Ryan* is an extraordinary case study, but it reflects direct level leadership and is appropriate for junior NCOs and company-grade officers. Apart from entertainment value, it has no real developmental benefit for senior NCOs or field grade officers. Conversely, *Glory* is an excellent example of

organizational leadership for both senior NCOs and field-grade officers. *Glory* would not provide the same value for a squad or platoon-level leaders. In a related manner, *Ike: Countdown to D-Day* is an excellent case study vehicle for strategic-level leaders.

This model provides an inexpensive and flexible means of leader development that can be executed at unit or organizational level with a minimum for resources in a format that is not daunting to most leaders. It has the added benefit of entertainment value. Moreover, commanders can also leverage individual development opportunities within the context of this methodology by causing junior leaders to plan and lead discussions. With due care taken in case study selection, the leader development requirements of any formation in the Army can be achieved using this case study methodology.

Notes

¹ The Army Leader Development Strategy 2013: Training, Education, Experience. Department of the Army, 2013.

² Ibid, 10.

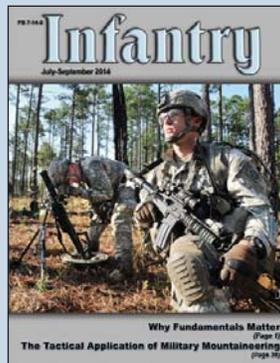
³ Command and General Staff Officers Course, Advanced Application Program, Elective A724, "Organizational Leadership Case Studies," Lesson Plan.

⁴ Ibid, Advance Sheet, A-724-AS-1.

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