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Muddling Leadership and Management in the United States Army

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Too often the Army seeks to solve dynamic issues, or "wicked problems," through management processes while underutilizing leadership. The Army is prone to this in part because it does not distinguish between leadership and management in doctrine or practice. Over the past sixty years, there has been an ongoing debate in *Military Review* as to the relationship between command, leadership and management. However, in the past few years little has been written that acknowledges the muddied overlap of the terms.

In the Army, leadership and management merge into one concept. The lack of differentiation between leadership and management creates a diluted view of leadership and its purpose. As leadership is doctrinally conceptualized in managerial terms, it limits the scope of personal power. It is difficult, if not impossible, to conduct management functions that stretch outside the bounds of a given authority. Management is important and necessary; however, leadership initiates effective and lasting change. The aim of this article is not to say that management is bad and leadership is good but rather that the two are different and they need to be discussed and applied appropriately. This can most easily be pointed to in the United States Military's ongoing struggle with sexual harassment and assault. Though this issues makes the case that notes the adverse consequences when waters of Leadership and Management are muddied together, it is surly persistent throughout other wicked and dynamic problems the Army faces.

The Army's definition of leadership is *the process of influencing people by providing purpose, direction, and motivation to accomplish the mission and improve the organization*.[1] The definition captures the essence of many other leadership definitions in academic and military literature. The word "process" is significant to describing the Army's doctrinal definition. Many western leadership experts such as Peter Northouse and Gary Yukl subscribe to a process typology of leadership.[2] Process indicates that leadership is a behavior that is interactive between a leader and a follower. In this context, leadership is an actionable behavior that can be learned.[3] Leadership is not based on a person being in a traditional position of power or authority.[4] Leaders are not necessarily generals, commanders, platoon leaders, or team leaders. Though the preceding groups often provide leadership, the definition also includes the emergent leader[5] such as the rifleman who in a desperate situation leads his fellow soldiers through a firefight due to the absence of those in assigned leadership positions. Despite this soldier's lack of formal authority, he is still able to provide purpose, direction, and motivation through his behavior. John Kotter argues that leadership process consists of establishing direction, aligning people, motivating, and inspiring. These actions are consistently different from management.[6]

Understanding what management is and how it is different from leadership is made difficult in military doctrine. The United States Army's, Army Doctrinal Reference Publication (ADRP) 1-02 does not include a doctrinal definition for management nor is there a definition in Joint Publication 1-02.[7] United Kingdom's military, a force in many ways similar to the American system, offers a frame of reference. The Great Britain's Defence Leadership Centre (DLC) defines management as

> the allocation and control of resources (human, material and financial) to achieve objectives, often within the constraints of time. Management requires the capability to deploy a range of techniques and skills to enhance and facilitate the planning, organizations and execution of the business.[8]

Management relies primarily on positional power since it deals with resources, control, and structural hierarchy.[9] The study of management is a relatively new endeavor developed at the turn of the 20th century in

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order to deal with the rise of large, complex and industrial institutions, whereas leadership is a topic that man has contended with since the beginning of time.[10]

Both leadership and management are incredibly important to a large institution such as the U.S. Army. If the Army only conducted management, it would be efficient in maintaining a bureaucratic process that moved in no direction and achieved pointless results. If only leadership, the Army would be inspired, motivated, and influenced—but incredibly disorganized to the point of extreme dysfunction. The military concept of command connects leadership and management. Command is defined as:

> The authority that a commander in the armed forces lawfully exercises over subordinates by virtue of rank or assignment. Command includes the authority and responsibility for effectively using available resources and for planning the employment of, organizing, directing, coordinating, and controlling military forces for the accomplishment of assigned missions. It also includes responsibility for health, welfare, morale, and discipline of assigned personnel.[11]

The definition hints to leadership but more dominantly points to management. Notably, command is positional whereas the Army's definition of leadership is not. The emergent leader can never command a rifle company unless formally recognized and given the legal authority to do so. The commander is expected to provide leadership. The spiritual well-being, or morale, of the soldiers can only be truly satisfied with purpose, motivation, and trust.[12]

The UK's DLC uses a simple illustration that highlights the complementary aspects of command, leadership, and management.[13] The diagram below shows that a commander under his authority must provide leadership and is responsible for management functions. The second diagram shows personal power that stretches outside bounds of authority. In other words, to be effective the commander must exercise all of the components including personal power. Though all aspects are necessary, it is clear that managing is not leading and vice versa.

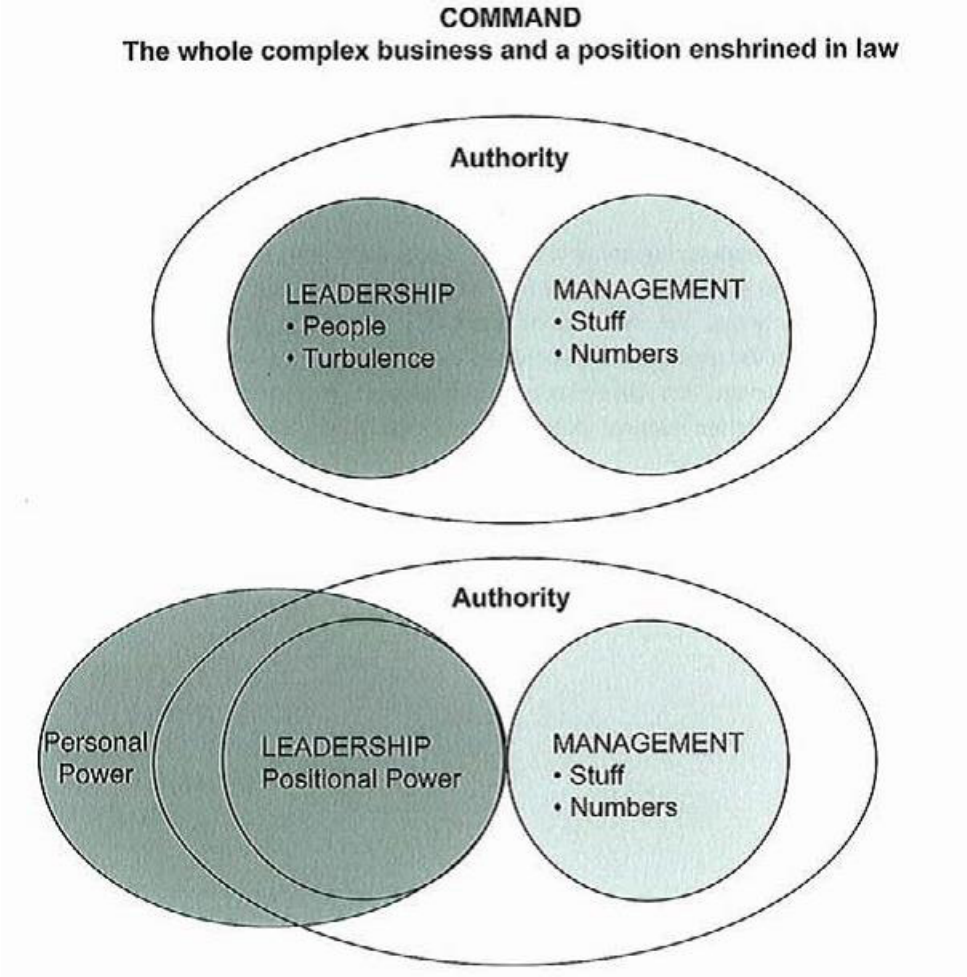

Figure 1: Command: (Great Britain, Ministry of Defense, Defence Leadership Centre, 2010, p. 8)

ADRP 6-22 is a great document that coherently describes what it means to be an Army Leader. However, ADRP 6-22 does not explain the relationship between management and leadership. Rather, the reader infers that management functions are things leaders do. There are many management functions described in ADRP 6-22, usually tied to specific functions such as risk, training, resource, time, and personnel management. For example, the Army Leadership Requirements Model's definition of stewardship and discipline have similarities to the definition used to describe management.[15] The examples that ADRP 6-22 uses under discipline point to highly prioritized management functions at the company and battalion level. Stewardship directly mentions management in its definition. Therefore, is management a leadership attribute and competency in Army philosophy?

A model depicting ADRP 6-22's relationship between command, leadership, and management would show leadership and management as overlapping circles.

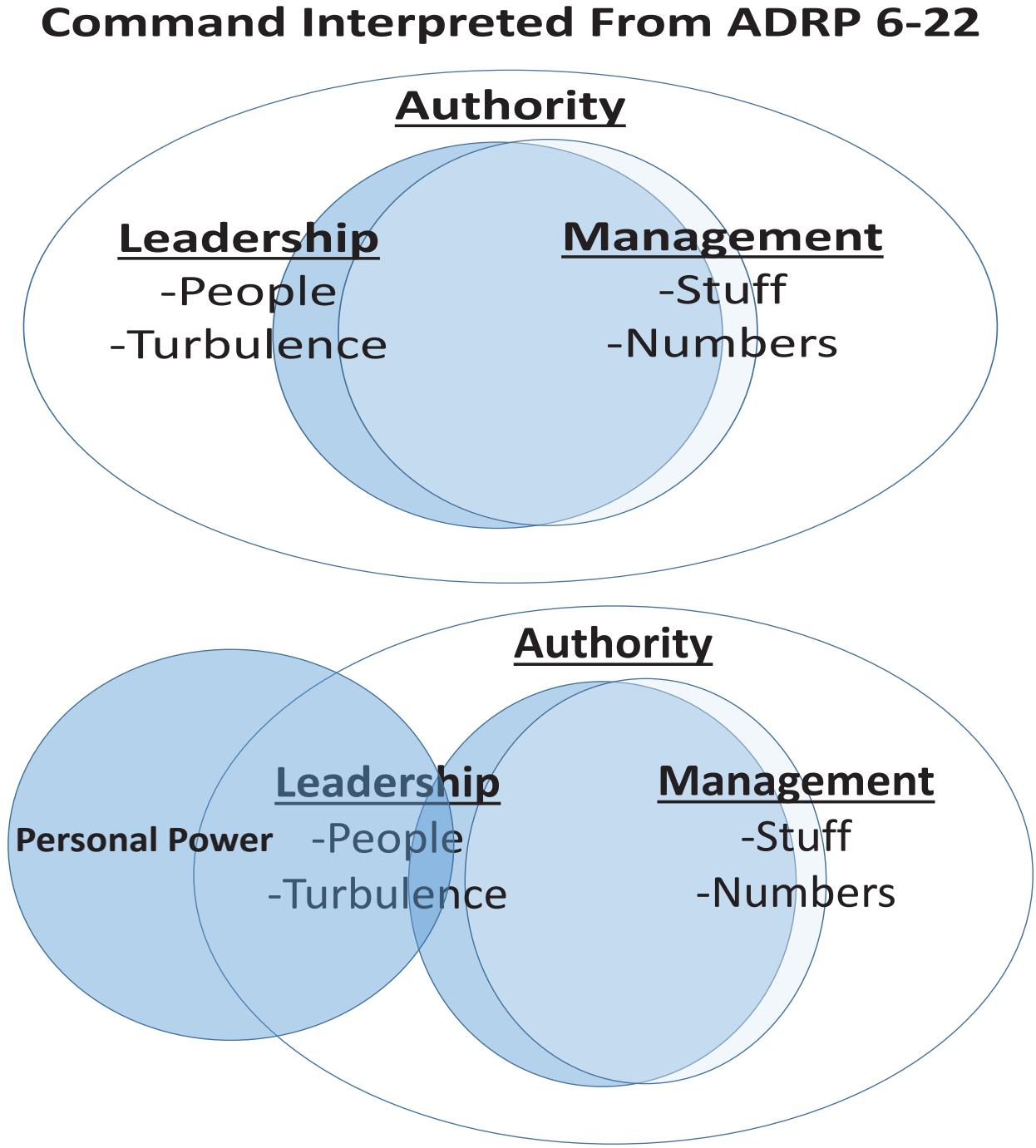

Figure 2: Command Interpreted from ADRP 6-22 (adapted from Great Britain, Ministry of Defense, Defense Leadership Center, 2010, p. 8)

There are a few obvious concerns that come to mind when the relationship is illustrated. The first, is that when one is placed in a leadership position such as command it becomes somewhat convoluted as to what one is doing. Am I currently conducting a management function or a leadership function or are they same thing? It becomes hard to know if one is placing their valuable time and energy conducting management or leadership.

Without defining management and describing it as something different to leadership, a contradiction emerges. Is the Army's philosophical stance that a leader is someone who is in a position of power or is leadership a process driven by actionable behavior not based on positional power? This confusion between management and leaderships contributes to organizations that are over-managed and under-led.[17]

Management is important especially at the company and battalion levels. Management is about handling complexity so that routine functions the organization must perform occur with successfully.[18] Abraham Zeleznik argues that management seeks to conserve and regulate an existing order to strengthen an existing institutional framework.[19] Management will create orderly results but is unlikely to create lasting and useful change.[20] The command and staff meeting is a prime example. Every week, commanders, senior NCOs, and staff officers sit around a table to gaze at an Excel spreadsheet to insure that every soldier is taken care of administratively. Though this is an important function, it does not effect change; it just allows units to overcome complexity in an organized manner. No matter how good one gets, the command and staff will not effect change. The necessary training management, command supply discipline programs, and inspections do not provide direction, inspire, influence, or motivate soldiers to complete the mission. Good training management may help create goals out of necessity, but the goals do not change how soldiers think, nor shape what is desirable or possible.[21] Change happens through leadership-when a leader understands the people and the issues at hand, provides a vision of a future that does not currently exist, and influences people to make that vision a reality.[22]

Keith Grint, a leading expert in the academic study of leadership, distinguishes them as two different forms of authority: management deals with certainty and leadership acts upon uncertainty.[23] Grint uses Rittel and Webber's work to categorize problem sets in three distinct groups: tame, wicked, and critical.[24] Wicked problems are complex social issues that can never be solved with a perfect solution and a scientific approach is inadequate for obtaining a solution, such as with crime, public education, and health care. There may be bad and good decisions; however, crime will never be completely eradicated nor will every person receive the best possible education, or live to be one hundred years old. Tame problems, though often intricate, are solvable problems through a method of science.[25] Examples include constructing a building, marksmanship training or conducting a combined arms breach. Grint also describes problems as critical. These problems require a directive, coercive, or, in his words, commanding approach to deal with an immediate crisis. An example could be reacting to an ambush or a building fire. Grint argues that wicked problems require leadership emphasis, where an emphasis on more scientific-oriented management is appropriate to solving tame problems.[26] Wicked problems are marked by uncertainty and complexity, so there is a greater need for collaboration. It requires leaders to ask the right questions. A leadership solution is often the most difficult approach.

Since wicked problems are associated with uncertainty, it implies that leaders do not have the answers but must interact with followers for input. Grint argues that due to pressure placed on leaders to act decisively, organizations apply techniques for solving tame or critical problems to wicked problems. Leadership requires leaders to reframe the problem and place the responsibility back on the follower. Only those directly facing the situation can solve wicked problems, which can be unpopular. Since wicked problems are often associated with longer periods of time, leadership can also be emotionally burdensome and consuming.[27]

United States Army is not immune to internal wicked problems. Sexual assaults (SA) and sexual harassment (SH) have been in the spotlight, so much that some members of Congress have lost faith in the military's ability to provide an acceptable solution. Senators Kristen Gillibrand and Charles Grassley have continued the fight to pass legislation removing the command's Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) authority to prose-

cute SA/SH related crimes, instead advocating for an outside authority to handle these cases.[28] The Department of Defense's (DoD) Equal Opportunity Program (DoD Directive 1350.2) created in 1988 was enacted to help prevent and address SH and other forms of unlawful discrimination.[29]

The programs in place, however, failed to effectively address the issue of SA/SH despite giving commanders the management tools to deal with the issue. In 2009, the Army created the Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention Program (SHARP). In 2012, the United States Government Accountability Office (GAO) published a study that evaluated the DoD's efforts to combat sexual harassment. The study concluded that the policies in place were in fact in line with the steps to solve the problem; however, greater leadership commitment was needed.[30] Mr. Russell Strand, Chief Behavioral Scientist for the U.S. Army Military Police School, when speaking at an Army Leader Exchange (ALx) seminar at Fort Leavenworth, KS also made the point that in the early days of SHARP the Army pushed policy but neglected the leadership emphasis in effecting change.[31] The GAO's study found that soldiers often felt unsure of their chain of command's commitment to SA/SH policy. There was a sentiment that SHARP billets and extra duty positions were arbitrarily filled. The report indicated that commanders perpetrate negative connotations of the SHARP and EO programs. Soldiers have mixed feelings about SHARP to this day. For many, it is a mindless PowerPoint and online training. In all of SHARP's good intentions, it was not creating change in large part due to a lack of leadership processes. These initial responses to deal with the SA/SH issue indicate that a tame solution had been applied to a wicked problem.

ADRP 6-22 cites John Kotter's eight stages successful leaders move through to create change.[32] For soldiers at the company level, the SHARP program's management process failed several stages. It did not create a sense of urgency, nor align a strong enough team at the lowest levels that could comprehend and communicate a vision of an alternate reality that does not currently exist. At the lowest levels, the program's management-heavy methods failed to align leaders that were empowered to disempower the cynics, create short-term results and credibility in order to build momentum to establish new behavior, and ultimately change organizational culture. In the long view of this ongoing saga, the DoD started with a necessary policy that was ineffective due to a lack of emphasis on the leadership process.

Today the some in the highest levels of command have recognized greater emphasis on leadership is the only way to enable positive change. Former Chief of Staff of the Army Ray Odierno made the combating of SA/SH his number one priority and Sergeant Major of the Army Dailey initiated the Not in My Squad Campaign.[33] These efforts were clearly designed to create a sense of urgency and to give credibility and enable lower echelons of leadership to deal with these truly dynamic issues. The leadership factor also quieted the cynics, who saw the Army's SHARP programs as ideologically driven bureaucrats attempting to implement their worldview through crude indoctrination. Instead, these leaders were able to communicate that SA/SH is actually a problem that affects the core values of the Army and that this problem can only be fixed by the Army.

There is evidence that the leadership emphasis is working. The biannual Workplace and Gender Relations Survey of Active Duty members reported that sexual assaults decreased from 7.1% in 2012 to 4.6% in 20014.[34] However, the wicked problem is also manifesting in different directions; the RAND Military Workplace Study showed that 52% of DoD females who reported sexual assaults reported some form of retaliation.[35] The evolving and uncertain nature of the wicked SA/SH problem is to be expected and leadership will be the greatest contributing factor in combating it.

Management, by nature of the military, is necessary. By not defining it, management becomes muddled into what we think leadership is. Since leadership is difficult and the idea of it is confused with management, the Army's tendency will continue to be to inappropriately apply management techniques. Many of the wicked problems the Army currently faces can be found outlined in Army Regulation 350-1 table G-1, neatly matched to quarterly, semiannual, and annual mandatory training requirements. Many of these requirements are satisfied by soldiers conducting an online or classroom training session.[36] Based on the nature of wicked problems, it is

unlikely that a one-hour class on human trafficking will have a positive effect in changing the situation. Education on such topics is not necessarily bad—but it does take time, a finite resource. There is a problem if good intended requirements become so burdensome and complex they disable the leader's ability to focus the appropriate amount of effort on providing purpose, direction, influence, and motivation to accomplish the mission. In essence, not providing the proper leadership emphasis to the greater problems may be the symptoms for the wicked problems in the first place.

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NOTES:

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5. Northouse, *Leadership Theory and Practice*, 5.

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10. Chandler, cited in Kotter, *Force for Change*, 3.

11. Department of Defense, *Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, 40.

12. Ralph, S. Cohen, "In the Ranks: Making Sense of Military Morale," *World Affairs* (May/June 2015), http://www.worldaffairsjournal.org/article/ranks-making-sense-military-morale. Cohen compiled data from the Center for Army

Leadership Annual Surveys of Army Leadership (CASAL) and concluded that morale is closely related to purpose, motivated by following a direction that leads to success.

13. Defence Leadership Centre, Defence Leadership, 8.

14. Ibid.

15. *Army Leadership*, 3-5, describes discipline under the context of character as one of the thirteen leader attributes. The Army describes discipline as *a mindset for a unit or an organization to practice sustained, systematic actions to reach and sustain a capability to perform its military function*. It then goes on to explain that examples of discipline are an effective Command Supply Discipline Program, Organizational Inspection Programs, and training management. ADRP 6-22 explains the Army competency of stewardship as:

> A group of strategies, policies, principles, and beliefs that pertain to the purposeful management and sustainment of the resources, expertise, and time-honored traditions and customs that make up the profession. Leaders serving as good stewards have concern for the lasting effects of their decisions about all of the resources they use and manage.

16. Defence Leadership Centre, *Defence Leadership*, 8.

17. John P. Kotter, *What Leaders Really Do* (USA: Harvard Business Review, 1999), 1-5.

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21. Zaleznik, "Managers and Leaders. Are They Different?"

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29. Quinton Chaney and Karen Merrill, *Sexual Assault and Harassment in the U.S Military* (New York: Nova Science Publishers, Inc., 2012).

30. Ibid.

31. Army Leader Exchange, "ALx Mr. Strand Leadership and SHARP 14 April 2016" Last modified 29 April 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vns545RhW8I&feature=youtube.

32. Kotter, *What Leaders Really Do*, 7:

> (1) Create a sense of urgency. (2) Put together a strong enough team to direct the process. (3) Create an appropriate vision. (4) Communicate the new vision broadly. (5) Empower employees to act on the vision. (6) Produce sufficient short-term results to give their efforts credibility and to disempower the cynics. (7) Build momentum and use that momentum to tackle tougher change problems. (8) Anchor the new behavior in organizational culture.

33. CSPAN, "General Odierno on Sexual Assaults in the Military," C-SPAN, last modified 13 June 2013, http://www.c-span.org/video/?313277-1/gen-odierno-opens-sexual-assault-prevention-summit; David Vergum, "Dailey: "Not in My Squad" Works to Empower NCOs," United States Department of the Army, October 13, 2015, https://www.army.mil/article/157009/Dailey___Not_in_My_Squad__works_to_empower_NCOs.

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35. Ibid.

36. Department of the Army, Army Regulation 350-1, *Army Training and Leader Development* (Washington D.C.: U.S. GPO, 2014) 167, http://www.apd.army.mil/pdffiles/r350_1.pdf.