



Soldiers of the 1st Battalion, 1st Air Defense Artillery Regiment, 38th Air Defense Artillery Brigade, conduct Patriot missile reload training during Orient Shield 23 at Camp Higashi-Chitose, Japan, 15 September 2023. Orient Shield is the largest U.S. Army and Japan Ground Self-Defense Force bilateral field training exercise executed in various locations throughout Japan to enhance interoperability and test and refine multidomain and cross-domain operations. (Photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Michael Flesch, U.S. Navy)

Soldiers Deserve Outstanding Leadership

Examining the Battalion Command Crisis within the U.S. Army Air Defense Artillery

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Army Air Defense Artillery (ADA) officers are competing for the opportunity to command battalions at a decreasing rate. The issue of command declination is not exclusive to ADA, as more officers across the Army are content with concluding their careers without commanding; however, the problem is more acute within ADA. The Army is deliberately growing the air defense force. Increasing requirements across several combatant commands, paired with a growing threat from unmanned aircraft systems (UAS)—highlighted in the Nagorno-Karabakh and Ukraine wars—have the Army prioritizing both modernization of the existing air defense force and the addition of new organizational force structure.¹ Senior leaders have specifically indicated a requirement to build more Patriot battalions and to develop counter-UAS batteries.² Additional air defense units would ostensibly enable the Army to better meet various air and missile defense requirements around the world without increasing the current operational tempo (OPTEMPO) that is already higher for ADA units than for all others in the Army.³ Furthermore, several active-duty divisions will also receive organic ADA units to support maneuver defense and counter-UAS requirements without the need to rely on global force management allocation decisions.⁴ To be successful, these formations require quality leaders, not those who are simply willing to continue serving.

Within the ADA, concerns regarding long-term OPTEMPO, family support and stability, leader support, and the addition of the Battalion Command Assessment Program as a requirement have resulted in a reduced interest in battalion command. If not addressed, this will eventually result in a degradation of the Army's air defense capabilities. This article will review concerns expressed by ADA officers and offer a set of common-sense recommendations that the ADA branch and the Army can apply to improve organizational culture and encourage more officers to compete for command assignments.

Background

Beginning in 2020, the Army changed the way it selects battalion commanders. While the legacy process of a board file review generating an order of merit list remained as one component, the Battalion Command Assessment Program (BCAP) was added

as an additional requirement. Seen as a mechanism to weed out toxic leaders, BCAP provides a more holistic assessment of potential commanders through a battery of tests, peer and subordinate feedback, and a blind, general officer-led panel interview.⁵ In 2023, fewer than 50 percent of eligible ADA officers opted into consideration for BCAP and selection for battalion command.⁶

As of March 2023, Human Resources Command projections for Lieutenant Colonel Centralized Selection List (CSL) positions—in other words, battalion commands—estimated only fourteen ADA officers would be available for slating to fill an expected fifteen commands in fiscal year (FY) 2025 despite an eligible population of forty-three.⁷ The Army's lead personnel officer, Lt. Gen. Douglas Stitt, stated that he would like to have twice as many officers available to compete as requirements to fill, though this projection suggested that ADA officers would likely be selected as long as they were not assessed as “toxic” given the number initially anticipated to compete.⁸ Across-the-board changes for FY25 battalion commands enabled more Army officers to compete, as the service did away with the previous three-time limitation on competing for command, instead allowing officers to continue opting in as long as they could complete command with at least one year remaining before mandatory retirement (twenty-eight years for nonpromotable lieutenant colonels).⁹ Ultimately, a full slate of “principals” was identified along with a partial slate of “alternates.”¹⁰

To put this in context, ADA's FY25 opt-in rate was the lowest within the Army's entire operations division.¹¹ For FY24, the opt-in rate was also the lowest in operations division and was nearly 20 percentage points below the average. Similarly for the brigade command CSL, the ADA opt-in rate for FY25 was by far the lowest in operations division—also nearly 20 percentage points below

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Table 1. Reasons ADA Officers Choose Not to Compete for Battalion Command

What are your primary motivations for not competing for battalion command? (Mark all that apply)	Responses	%
Family stability	42	62%
Plan to retire	33	49%
ADA OPTEMPO	29	43%
Burnout	26	38%
Current investigation/flag trends	12	18%
Spouse employment	11	16%
BCAP requirement	5	7%
Personal readiness for command	3	4%
Lack of desire to lead soldiers	2	3%
Other (please specify below)	22	32%

(Table by author)

average—and represented a steep drop off from the opt-in rate for FY24.

Framework

This article explores what is responsible for the current shortfall of commanders within ADA and whether there is something the Army or ADA branch can do to change this dynamic going forward. Recommendations will address three distinct areas: organizational, institutional, and leadership. Organizational issues will focus on force structure. Did deliberate Army decisions to “mothball” divisional air defense units combined with overemployment of current units result in burnout and cause the current lack of interest in command? If so, will the eventual addition of more force structure solve this problem, or are there additional steps that can and should be taken in the meantime? Institutional issues are more suggestive of enterprise-wide problems for the Army, not exclusive to ADA. These issues may be more cultural or generational and are consistent with concerns that are related to family support. Finally, a review of leadership issues will consider ways to improve leadership development and address the importance of leader support and “top cover,” another issue with impact far beyond the ADA.

While the focus of this article is on battalion command, the challenge of retaining leaders in key positions within the ADA branch extends far beyond battalion commanders to retention of enlisted personnel and warrant officers and centralized selection

of sergeants major within ADA. Officers tend to have greater opportunities to rotate out of the operational force for longer duration professional military education, fellowships, or less demanding assignments that may offer a semblance of break from the operational force. Battalion-level command was selected for a few specific reasons. Prior to this year’s eligibility changes, lieutenant colonels typically have not had the ability to retire before they were eligible to command at the battalion-level (prior service excepted). This means that officers are often not retiring immediately but instead are continuing to serve outside of these key leadership positions. Additionally, battalion commanders play a critical role in developing and retaining the high potential junior leaders who will ultimately be expected to lead the Army.¹² Furthermore, the number of battalion commands available is much greater than the number of brigades. Successfully addressing the battalion commander shortfall may also provide some measure of support to the subsequent requirement for brigade commanders.

An Army internal survey was distributed to every ADA major and lieutenant colonel to inquire about reasons to command as well as reasons not to.¹³ Participants were asked whether they had competed for battalion command or intended to do so when eligible. Subsequent questions were dependent on previous responses and offered several options for the motivations behind each participant’s choice, ultimately requesting the primary motivation and offering a write-in opportunity to provide additional feedback.

Table 2. Most Significant Reason ADA Officers Choose Not to Compete for Battalion Command

Which factor has most influenced your decision to not compete for battalion command?	Responses	%
Family stability	19	30%
Plan to retire	14	22%
Burnout	10	16%
ADA OPTEMPO	5	8%
Spouse employment	2	3%
Current investigation/flag trends	2	3%
Personal readiness for command	1	2%
Lack of desire to lead soldiers	1	2%
BCAP requirement	1	2%
Other (please specify below)	8	13%

(Table by author)

Table 3. Reasons that Officers Might Change Decision and Compete for Battalion Command

If you do not currently intend to compete for command, what factors would be most likely to change your decision? (Mark all that apply)	Responses	%
Opportunities for additional stabilization in command location	31	48%
Guarantee of follow-on assignment	29	45%
Command bonus	24	38%
Additional leader development/preparation	11	17%
Waive BCAP attendance	11	17%
Executive coaching	7	11%
Other (please specify below)	17	27%

(Table by author)

Table 4. Main Reason that Officers Might Change Decision and Compete for Battalion Command

Which factor would be most likely to change your decision to not compete for battalion command?	Responses	%
Opportunities for additional stabilization in command location	13	23%
Command bonus	12	21%
Guarantee of follow-on assignment	11	19%
Waive BCAP attendance	3	5%
Additional leader development/preparation	2	4%
Other (please specify below)	16	28%

(Table by author)

Survey Results

The survey was distributed to 409 individual active-duty officers. A total of 254 officers completed the survey, a 62 percent response rate.¹⁴ For the officers who have competed for battalion command or who intend to do so when eligible, the opportunity to train and lead soldiers and a sense of purpose and mission stood out as influencing their decision. In total, 63 percent of officers who have not yet competed for battalion command expressed their current intent to do so when eligible. Those who did not intend to compete for command pointed to family stability, a plan to retire, and ADA OPTEMPO most frequently as their reasons.

When asked to identify a primary reason for not competing, family stability led the way, followed by retirement and burnout. More than 80 percent of the “why” responses can be broken down into two larger categories, family (family stability, retirement, and spouse employment) and ADA culture (burnout, OPTEMPO, and investigations).

Stability in command location and guarantee of follow-on assignment—along with a command bonus—were noted as factors that would be most likely to encourage officers to change their mind and opt in to compete for command. Beyond the challenge of OPTEMPO—pace of deployments is more of an Army or Department of Defense issue—the areas that leaders can most readily impact fall into the categories of family (location stabilization and guaranteed follow-on assignment), value (command pay), and leader development.

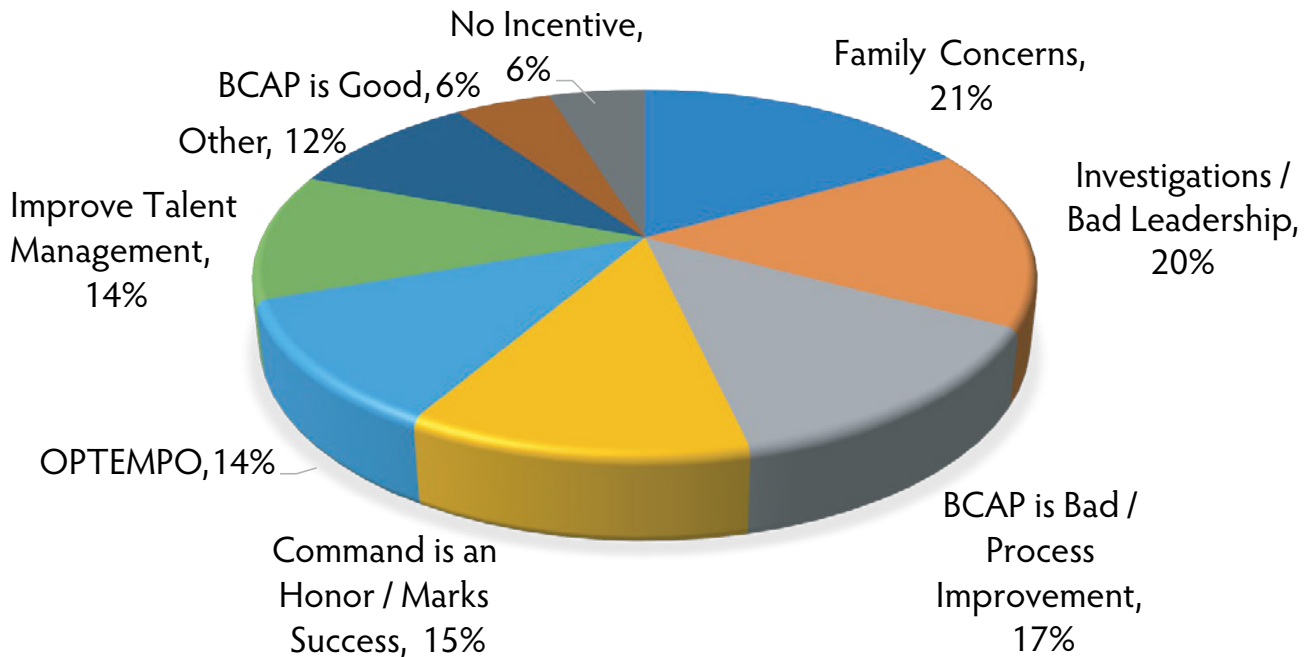
At the conclusion of the survey, participants had the opportunity to provide additional feedback related to ADA battalion command selection. While 15 percent of respondents noted that command would be an honor, they had pride in their job, or battalion command represented a mark of success in a military career, many others took the chance to highlight various concerns. One officer addressed the tension between the Army and family, saying, “I intend to compete for Battalion Command; however, my family’s well-being is a higher priority. The demands of Battalion Command seem larger than the pay-off.” Another officer spoke to concerns about investigations and the lack of top cover from leadership, saying, “The only hesitation I have is with the continuation of senior leaders not supporting subordinate commanders. In many respects, all levels

of command have become zero defect and anonymous complaints and SHARP/EO have become weaponized.” Others highlighted the challenge of the fast-paced ADA OPTEMPO, with one officer noting that he or she “turned down Battalion Command due to the constant deployments and strain on the Soldiers and equipment. The demand for ADA globally has far outpaced the size of the force and I estimate we are nearing a breaking point.” Even officers who agree that BCAP is an improvement note concerns with the lack of transparency, with one officer noting that “the process for selection should be more transparent. A public order of merit list would help.” Concerns like this one will only be exacerbated by the recent controversy involving a senior general officer repeatedly seeking to influence the BCAP selection panel.¹⁵

Army’s Competition for Talent

Before laying out specific recommendations for what the Army could or should do to impact the shortfall of officers competing for command, it is helpful to review some of the steps the Army is already taking to keep quality leaders on the Army team. The Army has endeavored recently to implement officer talent management initiatives that keep pace with corporate-style benefits. Officers now have more choice in career management and the ability to see all available jobs in the Assignment Interactive Module. Talent-based career alignment offers improved predictability for select junior officers by providing assured midcareer pathways and leveraging fellowships, branch transfers, and other broadening opportunities to plan the years following company-level command several years earlier during the Captains Career Course.¹⁶ Army Credentialing Opportunities On-Line provides online credentialing opportunities to enable soldiers to leverage military training or to upskill with credentialing assistance; however, recent reports suggest the Army will dramatically reduce the credentialing benefit in terms of both available funds and opportunities.¹⁷ Career-long assessments now start with junior officer professional military education rather than waiting until officers attend BCAP, presenting them the opportunity to become more self-aware and identify potential derailers earlier in their careers. These derailers can then be addressed by taking advantage of newly available coaching opportunities.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS



(Figure by author)

Figure. Additional Feedback on Battalion Command from ADA Pulse Survey Participants

These efforts are important but do little on the surface to address the major concerns expressed by ADA officers. They may continue to serve to retirement because of current talent management efforts, but these efforts are insufficient to encourage more officers to compete for command. Concerns regarding family support and stability, OPTEMPO, and leader support remain.

Recommendations

This section offers an assessment of each of the three areas previously referenced as impacting overall interest in battalion command: organizational, institutional, and leadership. Key changes in each of these areas would positively impact not only the ADA branch but leaders and organizations across the Army.

Organizational: Force structure. There is rarely enough equipment or money to buy more equipment and modernize what is already in the inventory, and there are rarely enough people to man the existing or desired equipment. This is a particular challenge for the Army regarding its air and missile defense

force. Missile defense systems such as the Patriot and Terminal High Altitude Area Defense are strategic assets with worldwide deployable missions used to assure partners and deter adversaries. The challenge in this space is that deterrence never stops. So long as rogue nations such as Iran or North Korea remain threats, efforts to deter them from taking offensive actions that impact U.S. or partner interests will continue. Current threats and hostile actions by Iranian proxies against international shipping in the Red Sea and against U.S. bases on the Arabian Peninsula illustrate this reality.¹⁸ While the rest of the Army has largely reduced the OPTEMPO associated with the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, air defense forces have continued their cycles of train-up, deploy, reintegrate, and repeat, sometimes deploying much earlier than anticipated and extending beyond initial orders. While few would argue against this practice in a wartime environment, when relied upon consistently for many years on end, this cycle becomes difficult to man. Often referred to as “burning readiness,” repeated employment of air defense units at the expense of modernization, training,

or other requirements could have a deleterious impact when a true emergency requires their utilization. Additionally, the elevated OPTEMPO and consistent lack of predictability have a prolonged, negative impact on families.¹⁹

If the Army is truly committed to growing the air defense force, it is time to make difficult decisions regarding finite resources. The Army itself is not growing in terms of personnel, so new force structure won't simply come with new people to operate and maintain it. The recent announcement of an Army-wide restructure that incorporates additional ADA authorizations is a great first step but must be accompanied by effective accession prioritization to include bonuses.²⁰ Furthermore, it focuses on a small portion of the ADA force, neglecting the very Patriot forces that are consistently deployed. Every decision comes with an opportunity cost. If air defense is truly a priority, then some other unit, probably some form of brigade combat team, must not be. The Army could take down a brigade combat team and use those soldiers to fill the holes that currently exist in air defense formations that are presently deploying at drastically reduced manning levels. This would be an emotionally charged decision, but it has been done before.²¹ Start with volunteers and those who have air defense-related additional skill identifiers for training completed on the Stinger man-portable air defense system or at the Joint Counter-Small UAS University. Moving these soldiers will alleviate strain on the air defense force right now. Additionally, those who reclassify—either voluntarily or involuntarily—will have the opportunity to train before they are expected to fill newly fielded formations.

Institutional: Family support and stability, value proposition. Impact on family has consistently been identified as a primary reason to leave the Army or not compete for command.²² According to the *2021 Active Duty Spouse Survey*, the Army civilian spouse unemployment rate is 25 percent, and the odds of unemployment increase significantly within the year following a permanent change of station move.²³ Service members and their families who are together but living apart temporarily as a geographic bachelor or bachelorette are on the rise. A 2021 Blue Star Families survey indicated that “23 percent of active duty military families had lived apart intentionally, or ‘geo-bached’ since 2016,” often due to spouse employment or children’s

education.²⁴ Service members and families must make family decisions that are best for them, considering one another’s careers, the needs of their children, and other factors as required. That said, frequent moves can bring the issue of family separation to the forefront much more frequently, taking something that should ideally be the exception and turning it into a more frequent occurrence. As then Army Chief of Staff Gen. John A. Wickham Jr. noted in 1983, “Competition between family and organizational needs can be destructive to both parties.”²⁵ Now forty years later, the Army must endeavor to provide greater opportunities to enable family stability by lessening permanent change of station moves without impacting opportunities for career progression. The stability and cohesion of the military family is critical to the retention and progression of married Army leaders.

For much of the private sector, flexibility in work environment has persisted beyond pandemic-related necessity. Modern technology enables teams to seamlessly integrate across many different locations to include those who work remotely or under a hybrid format. While some Army staff positions could easily support hybrid work opportunities, tactical organizations like battalion commands are unlikely to ever support regular remote work. That said, there are mechanisms to leverage the work environment in a way that provides more stability and predictability for families. While it will not work for every officer, serving as a brigade deputy commanding officer prior to battalion command could keep a family in place for an extra year. On the back end, the Army could institutionalize its current blended education pilot at the Army War College to allow for completion of the program without moving a family and without the strain of a simultaneous full-time assignment.²⁶ Now an officer could potentially have four years in place if his or her family prioritizes that. If the timing is right, that could be enough to get a child through high school from start to finish.

Many companies have turned to employee value propositions (EVPs) to help their organizations improve recruiting, retention, and commitment.²⁷ Angie Combs, CACI International chief human resources officer, communicated the purpose of the EVP, saying, “To attract and retain top talent, we need to be clear about what kind of employee experience our people can expect

in exchange for their hard work. The EVP articulates exactly this.²⁸ The document itself focuses on four key motivators—culture, total rewards, business objectives, and financial strength—and offers a compelling tagline, “Your potential is limitless. So is ours.”²⁹

Soldiers inherently want to be valued for their hard work. The Army—and specifically the ADA branch—currently lacks a clear value proposition that attracts, inspires, and motivates soldiers. Amid recruiting shortfalls, the Army recently took the somewhat surprising step of recycling a previous motto, returning to “Be All You Can Be” after more than twenty years.³⁰ Though this motto might not immediately have meant much to young soldiers, the change resonated with previous generations who had grown up with it.

A new motto does not, in and of itself, make an EVP, but the Army could certainly develop a value proposition based on the phrase, “Be All You Can Be.” Here’s a glimpse of what that might look like. The following reasons to stay in the Army are drawn from the 2023 *Department of the Army Career Engagement Survey*.³¹ The author uses officer responses to support the focus on command at the battalion level:

1. Opportunity to serve my country
2. How well my pay or benefits will meet my present/future needs
3. Opportunities to lead or train soldiers
4. My sense of purpose
5. Feeling like part of a team

With a little creative license, these can be distilled to culture, benefits, and leader development. An example Army value proposition can be read in the sidebar.

This is certainly not perfect as a value proposition goes, but it is a start for the Army to build on. It needs to be authentic and represent the lived experiences of soldiers. In other words, it cannot just be aspirational; this does not work if the Army as an organization is not really who or what it says it is. Whatever the result, this needs to be something that gets to the heart of why people join the Army, what differentiates their training or development, and how that benefits them in the long run—and then communicates that effectively.

The ADA branch could take this a step further to build commitment among soldiers and demonstrate value for leaders. This would include a focus on why specifically air defense is a priority and why the work its soldiers are doing is critically important to the Army and to the security of our Nation. This goes beyond “Health of the Force” initiatives such as the provision of a combat patch for deployments and extends to baseline resourcing and taking care of people. For years, Patriot units have been piecemealed together in deployment to meet force tracking number requirements in U.S. Central Command—or simply deployed understrength. It is hard to tell people how much they matter and how important the sense of teamwork is while repeatedly moving them between formations to meet immediate deployment requirements. Air and missile defense will play a critical role in the multi-domain operations that exemplify how the Army will fight in the future.³² The ADA branch needs to focus on the important groundwork today’s soldiers are laying for future operations and the legacy that they can leave behind.

Army Value Proposition

With a culture of service and purpose, the Army helps our Nation fight and win its wars. The Army will push you to be the best version of yourself, to do more than you thought you were capable of. You will belong to a team and have experiences like nowhere else when you are in the Army.

The Army values you and your family. The pay and benefits are competitive, but the work is meaningful, and you get to make a real, lasting difference.

The Army provides you real-world leadership development opportunities where people depend on you for their well-being. Through talent-based career alignment, military and civilian education programs, and fellowships, now more than ever, the Army offers an array of developmental opportunities throughout your career.

With the Army’s help, you can truly be all you can be!

Another way to demonstrate that leaders are valued is to provide command pay for CSL-selected commanders at the O-5/O-6 levels. The U.S. Navy already does this—it is a modest amount, \$100–\$150 per month.³³ This incentive offsets some of the extra costs generally associated with command, and it tells leaders that their contributions are appreciated. These officers could work nine to five on a staff somewhere, but they are choosing to command at a cost to themselves and often to their families. This simple recognition could go a long way toward helping leaders feel valued for their commitment.

Leadership: Supporting leaders. Leaders want to be supported. They want to know that their bosses will have their backs when they are proactive, yet things still manage to go wrong, and no one wants to be micromanaged every step of the way. Willingness to accept and underwrite risk in the context of empowering and developing subordinates is a fundamental aspect of the principal of mission command.³⁴ Furthermore, the opportunity to fail and grow is critical in leader development.³⁵ It would be disastrous if the Army developed a crop of leaders who feared taking any decisive action without prior approval from higher, choosing instead to just muddle through their commands without making waves rather than facing potentially negative consequences. If leaders have never been empowered to take risks or simply make decisions, how will they be prepared to lead in times of true crisis?

More important than avoiding mistakes altogether is learning from them and avoiding making the same ones over and over. According to Ed Catmull, cofounder and former president of Pixar, “Mistakes aren’t a necessary evil ... they are an inevitable consequence of doing something new ... and should be seen as valuable.”³⁶ Mistakes also present opportunities to challenge existing opinions and assumptions and open up to new ideas.³⁷ This is why Army units conduct after action reviews following training events—to reinforce what went well but more so to identify areas for improvement and make subsequent iterations even better. The character building that comes from failure is a critical step in the path to success and is hard to replicate otherwise. John Sears, who was Ronald Reagan’s campaign manager, pointed out, “There is something about losing and coming back from it that burns character into a man’s soul, breeds confidence without arrogance, and makes a man believe when he

talks about problems.”³⁸ This sounds a lot like what the Army should want in its senior leaders, so how do we instill it? At the lowest levels, the Army must place greater emphasis on providing opportunities for leaders to learn from their mistakes, challenge conventional thinking, and continuously improve through constructive feedback mechanisms.³⁹ In so doing, the Army can cultivate a cadre of senior leaders who embody resilience, humility, and the ability to navigate complex challenges with confidence and integrity.

Concerns regarding leader support are similarly evident in what has been referred to as the Army’s “investigation culture.” The team that conducts the Army’s command assessment programs identified that one of the most notable reasons commanders opted out of command consideration in past years was their lack of desire to deal with the “headaches” associated with the position.⁴⁰ There is a perception that leaders are often flagged during the course of their command assignments—though clear data has been surprisingly difficult to gather—and some express concern over the weaponization of investigations by disgruntled subordinates. According to the Army’s regulation on the suspension of favorable personnel actions (flags), “Commanders must Flag Soldiers who are suspects or subjects of an investigation ... that may result in disciplinary action or other loss to the Soldier’s rank, pay, or privileges.”⁴¹ The definition of investigations is expansive and includes commander’s inquiries, preliminary inquiries, and fact-finding inquiries conducted under Army Regulation 15-6, *Procedures for Administrative Investigations and Boards of Officers*. The potential impact to commanders is significant. The disposition of cases alleging officer misconduct is typically withheld by a division commander. This means that commanders can be at risk for selection or permanent change of station to Senior Service College or nominative assignments while waiting months for the adjudication of investigations. Promotion to colonel can even be delayed for those who have moved on to subsequent assignments. This creates untold amounts of stress for both leader and family. There is a better way—empower leaders with the flexibility to avoid imposing a flag in “misdemeanor” situations that appear unlikely to result in the suspension or relief of the commander while still respecting the investigation process. This would be an easy way to build trust at all levels.

Conclusion

There is clearly an issue when more than half of the officers who rise to the rank where battalion command is the next key developmental assignment are not interested in doing it. Given the chance to voice their concerns, officers have clearly identified issues with family stability, OPTEMPO, and leader support, among others. The point of identifying why leaders do not want to assume command is to determine what issues can be addressed, and how, to increase the interest and competition for command. This does not mean that every officer should command or that those who genuinely do not want to be commanders should do so; that would not be good for anyone. The value in addressing the issue and in increasing competition for command is ensuring that soldiers have the best possible leaders.

The Army should make several key changes that would benefit soldiers within the ADA while also improving the likelihood that prospective commanders will want to compete for the job. These changes include addressing ADA organizational challenges by decrementing one brigade combat team, creating a

well-thought-out Army value proposition and instituting command pay to help demonstrate how valued soldiers and leaders are, and addressing leader support concerns by focusing on how leaders are developed while also modifying the rules for assessing flags during investigations. The Army should also increase emphasis on family support and stability by making permanent its blended education program for the Army War College, enabling more families to stay in place for an extra year. It is not immediately clear whether these changes will make a single additional lieutenant colonel want to compete for battalion command. However, there is no question that these changes would be good for soldiers and would make ADA organizations better. They would help to develop better leaders and demonstrate an earnest commitment to some of the best, hardest working soldiers in today's Army. ■

The views expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the Department of the Army, Department of Defense, or the U.S. government.

Notes

1. Jen Judson, "US Army Plans to Grow Patriot Missile Defense Force," Defense News, 8 August 2023, <https://www.defensenews.com/land/2023/08/08/us-army-plans-to-grow-patriot-missile-defense-force/>; see also Jen Judson, "US Army Command Integrates New Capabilities into Patriot Forces," Defense News, 8 September 2022, <https://www.defensenews.com/interviews/2022/09/08/us-army-command-integrates-new-capabilities-into-patriot-forces/>.

2. STR Hearing: Regional Missile Defense Assets—Assessing Combatant Command and Allied Demand for Capabilities Before House Subcommittee on Strategic Forces, Committee on Armed Services, 118th Cong., 1st sess. (7 December 2023) (statement of Maj. Gen. Sean Gainey, Director, Joint Counter-Small Unmanned Aircraft Systems Office; Director, Fires, Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff, G-3/5/7), <https://armedservices.house.gov/hearings/str-hearing-regional-missile-defense-assets-assessing-com-and-allied-demand-capabilities>.

3. Jen Judson, "Army Seeks To Alleviate Overburdened Patriot Units," Defense News, 16 March 2016, <https://www.defensenews.com/digital-show-dailies/global-force-symposium/2016/03/16/army-seeks-to-alleviate-overburdened-patriot-units/>; see also Kyle Rempfer, "'Got to Fix That': Some Unit Ops Tempos Higher than Peaks of Afghan, Iraq Wars, Army Chief Says," *Army Times* (website), 2 October 2020, <https://www.armytimes.com/news/your-army/2020/10/02/got-to-fix-that-some-unit-ops-tempos-higher-than-peaks-of-afghan-iraq-wars-army-chief-says/>; Jen Judson, "Ukraine, Mideast Conflicts Place Renewed Pressure on Patriot Units," Defense News, 13 December

2023, <https://www.defensenews.com/land/2023/12/13/ukraine-mideast-conflicts-place-renewed-pressure-on-patriot-units/>.

4. Gainey, STR Hearing. Global force management is the process by which the military services provide trained and ready forces to the combatant commands.

5. James C. McConville and J. P. McGee, "Battalion Commanders Are the Seed Corn of the Army," *War on the Rocks*, 23 December 2019, <https://warontherocks.com/2019/12/battalion-commanders-are-the-seed-corn-of-the-army/>. The Army conducted a pilot for the Battalion Commander Assessment Program in 2019 but began formally using the assessment in January 2020 for fiscal year 2021 commands.

6. Timothy Gallagher (U.S. Army Human Resources Command Management Division), email to the author, 18 January 2024.

7. HRC, "LTC CSL Future Projections" (PowerPoint slides, Fort Knox, KY: HRC, 26 March 2023).

8. Douglas Stitt, statement during Army War College Fellows Orientation, Carlisle Barracks, PA, 2 August 2023. Reconfirmed via subsequent email on 28 December 2023 and in-person discussion on 5 January 2024. Requirements include the slate of principals and one to two alternates per principal.

9. Gallagher, email. For mandatory retirement directed in U.S. law, see "Retirement for Years of Service: Regular Lieutenant Colonels and Commanders," 10 U.S.C. § 633 (2022), <https://www.govinfo.gov/app/details/USCODE-2022-title10/USCODE-2022-title10-subtitleA-partII-chap36-subchapIII-sec633>.

10. HRC, "FY25 Lieutenant Colonel Army Competitive Category Centralized Selection List Principal/Alternate List (OD, OSD, FSD, ID)" (Fort Knox, KY: HRC, 10 January 2024), <https://www.hrc.army.mil/content/CSL%20-CURRENT%20SELECTION%20RESULTS>.

11. HRC, "CSL OPT Out Stats" (Fort Knox, KY: HRC, n.d.). Operations division includes air defense artillery, armor, aviation, chemical, engineer, field artillery, infantry, and military police. The field artillery opt-in rate for fiscal year 2025 was the same as the air defense artillery rate.

12. Everett Spain, Gautam Mukunda, and Archie Bates, "The Battalion Commander Effect," *Parameters* 51, no. 3 (2021), <https://press.armywarcollege.edu/parameters/vol51/iss3/10/>.

13. The survey was conducted by a team at the Army's Research Facilitation Laboratory. Special thanks to Dr. Loryana Vie, Steve Sablan, Lt. Col. Dave Crigger (Army Talent Management Task Force), and the rest of the team that assisted the author in survey approval, development, and execution.

14. Of the 254 responses, 211 provided consent for use in research; subsequent data is drawn only from consented responses. Percentages in responses within the tables shown typically vary by 0–2 percent.

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