

DETERMINING SIGNIFICANT LEADERSHIP BEHAVIORS OF ACTIVE DUTY AIR FORCE
CHIEF MASTER SERGEANTS WORKING ON RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE, TEXAS:
A PHENOMENOLOGICAL INQUIRY

by

PAUL A. MACHEN II

B.S., Southern Illinois University, 1993

M.B.A., City University, 1998

AN ABSTRACT OF A DISSERTATION

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Educational Leadership

College of Education

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ABSTRACT

To date, several academic studies have examined officer personnel leadership behaviors, while the leadership traits of enlisted personnel have largely been ignored. This dissertation investigates the leadership behaviors of active duty chief master sergeants (CMSgt) working on Randolph Air Force Base (AFB), Texas and offers conclusions concerning the acquisition of these behaviors. The main distinction between an officer and enlisted person is, enlisted did not complete an undergraduate college degree when they first entered the Air Force. The enlisted population was selected because of the researcher's background in the Air Force.

The sample selection process consisted of obtaining a list from the Air Force of active duty CMSgts working on Randolph AFB. Next, several CMSgts were randomly selected and asked to participate in the study. Those who chose to participate were asked if they knew of other CMSgts who could provide useful information for this study. Four of these participants were chosen to complete in the pilot study phase. Data was collected through the use of semi-structured interviews until thematic saturation was accomplished. Data analysis began with the first pilot interview and continued throughout all phases of this research study.

This research found 12 significant leadership behaviors, which can be placed into eight categories. The eight categories are: Technical; Counselor; Problem-Solver; Manager; Networker; Communicate Vision; Eyes and Ears; Run Interference. The Technical category contains one sub-category: Assign Task / Communicate Expectations. The Counselor category is comprised of Influence, Supporter, and Facilitator, while the Manager category is made up of Decision Maker, Advisor, and Mentor.

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Chapter 1

Statement of the Problem

Since the birth of the Air Force as a separate organization in 1948, its leadership has expended an immense amount of resources on the leadership behavior development for commissioned officer personnel. As a result, Air Force leadership literature and private sector research efforts have been primarily focused on officer leadership, while virtually none addresses enlisted leadership behaviors. In fact, *Air Force Pamphlet 36-2241 Volumes I & II* are the only documents, internal or external to the Air Force, which contain information about enlisted personnel as leaders. These documents, which are study guides for enlisted persons attempting to advance in rank, address leadership areas such as traits, principles, and behaviors. While several academic studies provide a scholarly research basis for officer leadership, none exist to support enlisted leadership behaviors. This shortage of enlisted leadership focus is in stark contrast to the information that merges out of conversations with senior officer personnel and articles published in military journals such as the *Airmen Magazine*, *Air and Space Power Journal* or the *Armed Forces Journal*, suggesting that senior enlisted leaders are an integral part of accomplishing the Air Force mission.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this dissertation was to determine significant leadership behaviors of active duty Air Force (AF) Chief Master Sergeants (CMSgt) employed on Randolph Air Force Base, located in San Antonio, Texas. United States Air Force (1999) states that CMSgts perform as superintendents, managers, and provide senior enlisted leadership at all AF organizational levels. Despite this proclaimed leadership significance of CMSgts, AF literature and associated research studies are primarily focused on officers with very little attention paid to enlisted leadership behaviors.

Background

Enlisted Force Structure

The current enlisted force organizational structure outlines the career program for enlisted personnel. It also gives them the opportunity to grow professionally and helps the AF manage formal training, education, and promotion.

United States Air Force (2004) outlines the following enlisted force levels:

- Senior Noncommissioned Officer (Senior NCO):

Chief Master Sergeant (CMSgt) Enlisted Grade 9 (E9)	Superintendent/Manager
Senior Master Sergeant (SMSgt) (E8)	Superintendent/Manager
Master Sergeant (MSgt) (E7)	Craftsman/Supervisor/Manager

- Noncommissioned Officer (NCO):

Technical Sergeant (TSgt) (E6)	Craftsman/Supervisor
Staff Sergeant (SSgt) (E5)	Craftsman/Supervisor

- Airman:

Senior Airman (SrA) (E4)	Journeyman/Supervisor
Airman First Class (A1C) (E3)	Apprentice/Worker
Airman (Amn) (E2)	Apprentice/Worker
Airman Basic (AB) (E1)	Apprentice

The outline above shows each enlisted grade and a few words describing the primary job focus while accomplishing duties at a particular grade. CMSgts represent the top AF enlisted grade and were the focus of this study. Whatever AF specialty (job) they do, CMSgts primarily perform as superintendents and managers, and function as senior enlisted leaders. Because of their seniority and experience, they perform a variety of leadership and managerial level positions. Additionally,

they advise senior officers across all organizational levels and direct assignments, and participate in the education, training, and utilization of enlisted personnel (United States Air Force, 2004).

CMSgt Creation

The creation of the CMSgt and SMSgt grades was probably the most important force development change for AF enlisted personnel. President Dwight Eisenhower signed the grades into law on May 20, 1958, making CMSgt the highest enlisted grade in the Air Force. Prior to CMSgt, MSgt represented the highest enlisted grade. The primary reason for the establishment of CMSgt and SMSgt was to provide the AF with higher quality senior enlisted leaders (Stewart, 1997).

Enlisted Force Development

Chief Master Sergeant M. Gilbert, former AF Chief of Enlisted Force Development assigned to the Pentagon in Washington DC, stated that Air Force senior leaders recognized the need for improvement concerning enlisted leadership development, and launched a new initiative called *Enlisted Force Development* (personal communication, October 8, 2002) . The purpose was to establish a more deliberate leadership development process through the use of factors such as job experiences, education and training, and job assignment utilization. The construction of the enlisted force development grew out of an Air Force Chief of Staff Integrated Process Team (1999) tasked to provide recommendations necessary to enhance the leadership capabilities of officer, enlisted, and civilian personnel (civil service) working for the military. Enlisted force development is based on Dr. T. Jacobs' and Dr. Elliot Jaques' Stratified Systems Theory, which claims that organizations are divided horizontally into functional departments and vertically into three levels: tactical, operational, and strategic (Meeker, 1999).

At the tactical level, Airmen and NCOs focus on learning, and becoming technical experts. As they advance in rank and technical proficiency, they begin training others and often become first line supervisors. When an enlisted person transitions to the Senior NCO grades, they begin to focus on how their work sections relate to others. They use their expertise, experience, and leadership and management skills to convert direction from superior officers into mission accomplishment. Finally, the strategic level is where some of the most senior enlisted leaders are assigned. These positions are filled primarily by CMSgts (No author, 2004).

Professional Military Education

There are currently four primary means through which CMSgts participate in leadership development. One way is traditional classroom completion of the following enlisted professional military education courses:

- Airman Leadership School (ALS): Prepares SrA to supervise and lead other workers and foster a commitment to the military profession.
- Noncommissioned Officer Academy (NCOA): Enables TSgts to expand their perspective of the military profession, while simultaneously preparing them to manage and lead units.
- Senior Noncommissioned Officer Academy (SNCOA): Prepares SMSgts and some MSgts to lead the enlisted force and reinforces their commitment to the military profession.

Leadership and management is the largest section and is divided into several application level modules. Each module culminates with a case study where the students practice newly learned principles by applying them to simulated situations. (Enlisted Professional Military Education, 2002).

CMSgt Leadership Course (CLC): This course began in 2004 to get newly promoted CMSgts ready to assume their duties as senior enlisted leaders. The mission of CLC is to educate senior enlisted

leaders by effectively delivering Professional Military Education designed to enhance the knowledge, skill and ability and reinforce the war fighters' ethos. This is done by providing current, effective, and appropriate leadership and management education and training to meet current and foreseeable requirements of ever changing AF and department of Defense missions.

Lane (1996) states that enlisted professional military education began in 1944 to increase the overall efficiency of NCOs. Early focus was improvement of leadership and technical skills. From 1944 to 1952, professional military education focused primarily on NCOs versus Senior NCOs. In 1952, a two-week course was created in West Drayton, United Kingdom for Senior NCOs; this was later expanded to three weeks. Over the years, AF enlisted professional military education has undergone significant changes in order to provide leadership and management education. The number of courses has changed from five, to four, and then to three, and once again back to four levels, all these changes were in order to provide leadership development training at the appropriate time in an enlisted person AF career. In recent years, several AF installations have established locally sponsored enlisted professional military education seminars to provide even more leadership instruction for its enlisted personnel. This begs the question of why? While no clear answer exist, it appears that ALS, NCOA, SNCOA, and CLC alone do not provide enough leadership development training for enlisted personnel.

In recent years, some CMSgts assigned to special duties such as Command CMSgt and other functional positions at Major Command and higher headquarters organizational levels are selected to participate in leadership courses such as Center for Creative Leadership (CCL) and the Gettysburg Experience.

The CCL is a top-ranked, global provider of executive education that develops better leaders through its exclusive focus on leadership education and research. Founded in 1970 as a nonprofit,

CCL helps clients around the world to cultivate creative leadership—the capacity to achieve more than imagined by thinking and acting beyond boundaries (2009).

The Gettysburg Experience was developed to respond to the need for intensive leadership training—something which many companies do not provide as integral to their management development curricula. Participants revisit the Battle of Gettysburg in the context of today's management challenges, affording them the opportunity to spend quality time focused on building the leadership skills that they need to succeed (The Conference Board, 2009).

Air Force Training Programs

Another way in which CMSgts participate in leadership development is through AF and other training programs. Training for all enlisted personnel that form the basis of this study begins at Basic Military Training, which takes place at Lackland Air Force Base, located in San Antonio, Texas. Basic Military Training is a seven-week long course that gives participants an eye-opening experience of the Air Force (AF) and its organizational culture. Once completed, personnel attend a technical school for initial AF specialty (job) training. After technical school, they are assigned to an installation and receive additional AF specialty and other on-the-job training at selected times throughout their military career.

The AF manages technical schools and on-the-job training for all enlisted personnel through a classification system. United States Air Force (2001) describes this system as a method to identify duties and tasks, identify qualifications, and provide visible career progression patterns for every enlisted job.

Every AF specialty has a career field manager to determine entry requirements and direct education and training activities. Career field managers manage these activities through the use of a career field education and training plan. The career field education and training plan specifies the

what, when, where, and how of education and training, along with available resources and constraints, and, through the use of a career path, serves as a road map for professional growth within the AF specialty. The career path helps individuals determine when they can expect to be promoted, receive training, and/or hold a specific duty position within their AF specialty (U.S. United States Air Force, 2003).

Upon promotion to CMSgt, individuals who have completed SNCOA in-residence are awarded a chief enlisted manager code denoted by a 00 in the last two digits of the AF specialty code. United States Air Force (2001) provides the following example of CMSgt Air Force specialty code (3E700) for a Firefighter:

- 3E: Civil Engineering (occupation/job set)
- 7: Fire Protection (specific job)
- 00: CEM (skill level)

Civilian Education

A third way CMSgts participate in leadership development is through off-duty civilian education. United States Air Force (2004) suggests that enlisted personnel should participate in civilian education to prepare them for increased leadership responsibilities. They are encouraged to complete at least a Community College of the Air Force or other associates degree, preferably related to their current specialty, to enhance their overall capability and value to the Air Force. The Community College of the Air Force headquarters, located at Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama, is an institution of higher learning designed for AF enlisted members and is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. The Community College of the Air Force began in the early 1970s as a way for enlisted individuals to both receive formal recognition for their training, and enhance their skills as technicians, leaders, and citizens.

The college awards an associate in applied science degree to students who have successfully completed a degree program designed for their particular specialty. Enlisted personnel begin earning college credits that can be applied towards a degree at basic military training. Technical school, correspondence courses, and on-the-job skill-level upgrades provide the required technical hours, while professional military and civilian education satisfy the leadership, management, and other traditional subject requirements (Community College of the Air Force, 2001). Air Force Enlisted Demographical Data (2002) indicates that over 96% of CMSgts have at least an associate degree.

Special Duty Assignments

A few CMSgts are allowed to take on unique job assignments which enable them to gain further leadership experience. For example, AF commanders assigned at installation and above levels may select one CMSgt as their Command CMSgt (CCM). These positions carry a broad scope of responsibility and influence over the enlisted corps. Individuals serving in this position are the enlisted focal point for their commander, and exercise general leadership for all enlisted programs, people, and issues within their respective organizations. Another unique job is the Functional Manager. A CMSgt holding this position manages enlisted career fields for several installations. As the occupational expert for their career field, they provide subject-matter expertise to employees at assigned AF installations and higher headquarters as required (United States Air Force, 2004).

CMSgt Leadership Behavior and Measurement

This next section will begin to address how the AF currently assesses enlisted leadership behaviors. AF leaders at all organization levels, be it enlisted, officer, and civilian, are taught to utilize AF Core Values as a guide for all decisions and actions; including leadership behaviors. The core values are: *Integrity, Service Before Self, and Excellence In All We Do*. *Integrity*, a character

trait, is the willingness to do what is right even when no one is looking. It is the inner voice of self-control and the basis for the trust that is imperative to today's military. Integrity also addresses other trait. These include:

- **Courage.** A person of integrity possesses moral courage and does what is right even if it is detrimental to them on an individual level.
- **Honesty.** The hallmark of the military professional, because in the military, a person's word forms the basis of their bond to their colleagues.
- **Responsibility.** No person of integrity is irresponsible: a person of true integrity acknowledges his or her duties and acts accordingly.
- **Accountability.** No person of integrity tries to shift the blame to others or take credit for the work of others.
- **Justice.** A person of integrity practices justice, equality, and fairness. Those who do similar things must get similar rewards or punishments.
- **Openness.** Professionals of integrity encourage a free flow of information within the organization. They seek feedback from all directions to ensure they are fulfilling key responsibilities, and are not afraid to allow anyone examine their decisions and actions.
- **Self-respect.** To have integrity is to respect oneself as both a professional and a human being. A person of integrity does not behave in ways that would bring discredit upon themselves or the organization to which they belong.
- **Humility.** Being sobered by the awesome task of defending the Constitution of the United States of America (United States Air Force, 1997, p.4).

Service Before Self is defined as professional duties taking precedence over personal desires and includes the following behaviors:

- Rule following. The notion of doing one's duty is most commonly expressed through careful observance of rules. While it may be the case that professionals are expected to exercise judgment in the performance of their duties, good professionals understand that rules exist for a reason, and the default position must be to follow those rules unless there is a clear, operational reason for refusing to do so.
- Respect for others.
- Discipline and self-control. Professionals cannot indulge themselves in self-pity, discouragement, anger, frustration, or defeatism. They have a fundamental moral obligation to the persons they lead to strike a tone of confidence and forward-looking optimism.
- Faith in the system. To lose faith in the system is to adopt the view that you know better than those above you in the chain of command. If a leader resists the temptation to doubt the system, then subordinates are more likely to adopt similar behavior patterns (United States Air Force, 1997, p. 7).

Excellence can be defined as the development of a sustained passion for continuous improvement and innovation, aiming to propel the Air Force into a long-term, upward spiral of accomplishment and performance, and addresses the following:

- Product/service excellence. Focus on providing services and generating products that simultaneously anticipate and respond customer needs and desires, and do so within the boundaries established by the tax-paying public.
- Personal excellence. Military professionals must seek out and complete professional military education, stay in peak physical and mental shape, and continue to refresh their general educational knowledge.

- Community excellence. Community excellence is achieved when the members of an organization work together to successfully reach a common goal in an atmosphere free of fear that preserves individual self-worth.
- Resources excellence. Implement policies to ensure the best possible cradle-to-grave management of resources.
- Material resources excellence. Military professionals have an obligation to ensure they only request for equipment and property that is mission essential.
- Human resources excellence. This means that the AF seeks to recruit, train, promote, and retain only those people who are able to do the best job. In other words, it invests its resources and training only in those people in whom it is confident can succeed.
- Operations excellence. There are two kinds of operations excellence: Internal and External.
 - Excellence of internal operations. This encompasses that ways in which all elements of the Air Force conduct business internally.
 - Excellence of external operations. This form of excellence pertains to the way that members of the Air Force interact with the world as they conduct operations. In peace time this means being sensitive to the rules governing environmental pollution, and in a wartime situation, refers to obeying the laws of war (United States Air Force, 1997, p.10).

Successful military leaders generally possess common qualities and adhere to certain leadership principles. The AF indicates the following leadership qualities apply to its enlisted personnel: Positive Attitude; Values; Character; Charisma; Compassion; Credibility; Self-reliant; Tenacity; Stamina; Optimistic; Sense of humor; Skilled mediators and negotiators; and World-mindedness.

Finally, the AF offers the following enlisted leadership principles: Take care of people; Motivate people; Be a follower; Know the job; Know yourself; Set the example; Communicate; Educate yourself and others; Equip your troops; Accept responsibility; Develop teamwork; and Read, study, watch, and prepare (United States Air Force, 2003). As one can see, the list of qualities and principles is endless, which supports the problem with subscribing only to trait leadership theory.

Locke et al (1991) argues that traits constitute only a portion of the leadership picture. If leaders are to be effective they must utilize a wide range of these traits to develop their leadership skills, and formulate and implement a vision that works towards accomplishing organizational goals.

The only measurement of CMSgt leadership behaviors is obtained during performance evaluations which are documented on the Air Force Form 911, Senior NCO Enlisted Performance Report. The instructional verbiage on the form in the leadership section states that supervisors must consider whether the CMSgt motivates peers or subordinates, maintains discipline, sets and enforces standards, evaluates subordinates fairly and consistently, plans and organizes work, and fosters teamwork. This essentially adds more requirements to the already large list of CMSgt leadership behaviors. Once again, there is no research to support the significance of these behaviors. It is the researcher's assumption that these stated enlisted leadership behaviors appear to have been adopted from the general leadership literature for Air Force officers and later carried over wholesale to enlisted personnel.

Research Questions

Attempting to determine significant CMSgt leadership behaviors raises three important questions:

1. What sources can be used to ascertain active duty Air Force CMSgt leadership behaviors?
2. Is there a common set of behaviors?
3. If there are such behaviors, which adult learning methods facilitate their acquisition?

Research Question #1

When considering how to approach answering this first question, one should begin with assessing the different methods which could be used to describe leadership behaviors. One way could be for leaders to use a diary to describe their leadership behaviors, and how they change during different situations. However, researchers typically use only a few leadership categories and relevant information may be lost in translation. Continuous observation refers to the researcher watching the leader and recording behaviors. This method is costly and subject to biased participant data because the leader in question is aware of the researcher's presence. Activity sampling is similar to continuous observation, except that the leader is observed for a specific time period. The problem is that observing activities for a finite time can result in incomplete data. Some researchers use self-reports, while others prefer behavior descriptions provided by subordinates, peers, or external observers. The argument for self-report is they avoid inaccurate attributions, projection, and stereotyping. However, self-report measures are susceptible to self-serving bias (Berry, 1998). Other data gathering methods include the use of questionnaires which, while subject to certain bias, low return rate, and interpretation error, are a relatively inexpensive method of collecting data (Yukl, 1981). Finally, Cassell and Symon (2004) and most other qualitative literature supports the

interview method as the most common method of gathering data when conducting this kind of research. Additionally, Krathwohl (1998) asserts that interviews are the most effective research method in circumstances when the researcher must explore, probe, and search for what is significant about a person or situation.

Research Question #2

First and foremost, there is no definitive list of significant active duty Air Force CMSgt leadership behaviors. In recent years, the Air Force has begun to address this issue, but to date it has no academic research data other than opinions of senior officer and enlisted employees to support the existence of CMSgt leadership behaviors.

Research Question #3

In beginning to consider this final question, the researcher assumes that adult education methods are already utilized to acquire and enhance CMSgt leadership behaviors, the lack of research into CMSgt leadership development makes their actual effectiveness unknown. One example of the existence of leadership development programs is the Air Force's use of computer-based professional military education courses to supplement formal in-residence completion of similar courses. This *self-directed* and *distance* learning is deeply rooted in adult education, which offer several theories unique to the education and training of the mature learner. Although speculative at this point, potential areas include *self-directed*, *distance*, and *workplace learning*, along with *experiential learning*, and *program planning* to name a few. Thus, a primary goal of this study was to find a common core of significant active duty Air Force CMSgt leadership behaviors.

Significance of Study

Korb (1981) states that military service branches are advanced technological-based organizations. The majority of its employees holding leadership positions are actually professional experts in some technical area. In recent years, the Air Force has been refocusing on CMSgts as senior leaders. This refocus requires a hard look at enlisted leadership development programs. Additionally, basic training, initial and follow-on technical school, and professional military and civilian education courses account for a significant amount of fiscal resources used for enlisted leadership development. As exploratory research, this study serves as a basis for further examination of active duty Air Force enlisted leadership behaviors. It also offers recommendations for better utilization of adult education learning methods by practitioners in order to enhance the leadership capabilities of Air Force enlisted personnel and other similar adult populations.

Limitations of Study

1. No studies exist to determine significant leadership behaviors of either active duty Air Force CMSgts or other enlisted personnel.
2. Because CMSgts represent only a portion of the military population results are can only be generalized to other similar military enlisted populations such the Army's Sergeant Major or the Navy's Master Chief Petty Officer.
3. The researcher was part of the study population and has pre-conceived notions as to the existence of significant behaviors.
4. Purposive sampling from a single Air Force installation limited the researcher's ability to generalize significant behaviors to other similar populations.

Krathwohl (1998, pg. 625) provides additional limitations specifically for interviews:

5. Accuracy depends on subject's self-perception, which may or may not accurately reflect "objective judgment of others.
6. There is no assurance that participants correctly understood the questions.
7. Interviews may influence responses, especially if respondent seeks to please.

Assumptions

1. The existing literature does address significant leadership behaviors utilized by active duty Air Force CMSgts; the challenge is to identify such behaviors.
2. CMSgts, located at Randolph Air Force Base, Texas, will provide enough information to derive central leadership behavior themes for the effected population.
3. CMSgts working in at least two different jobs will provide the most useful information.
4. CMSgts with at least 24 years of military service will provide the most useful information.
5. CMSgts with at least an associate's degree will provide the most useful information.

The last three assumptions are based on average time in service, time in grade, and education level of those currently holding the rank of CMSgt (2006).

Methodology

This study was an exploratory effort to determine significant active duty Air Force CMSgt leadership behaviors. The qualitative research method was most appropriate for this study. Krathwohl (1998, p. 229) and others indicate qualitative methods are extremely useful for exploration because they:

- Humanize the problem.
- Provide a holistic view of the phenomenon.
- Provide a means of investigation when research is lacking.
- Emphasis is placed on discovery rather than validation or confirmation.

For this study, the plan was to first utilize purposeful sampling methods to identify four Randolph AFB CMSgts to participate in a pilot study. The pilot study was an opportunity to fine tune interview questions and other issues affecting this study. Next, additional CMSgts were recruited using snowball sampling (explained in Chapter 3) for the interview portion of the study. Finally, findings, results, and implications for future studies were collated. Triangulation, validity, and reliability issues were addressed (refer to Chapter 3) to the maximum extent possible within the confines of this study.

Definition of Terms

1. Air Force (AF) – This is the military branch or the organization which employs the CMSgts who participated in this study.
2. Air Force Chief of Staff: Highest ranking military personnel (4-Star General) in the Air Force, working directly for the Secretary of Air Force (civilian), who is in direct charge of the Air Force. The Chief of Staff serves as an advisor to the President, Secretary of Defense, and the National Security Council.
3. Air Force Specialty Code (AFSC): This is the 5-digit code given to all enlisted personnel when they complete their initial technical school.
4. AFEPME – Air Force Enlisted Professional Military Education : This system is comprised of the four leadership schools required for enlisted members to attend at various time in their career. They are: Airman Leadership School (ALS); Noncommissioned Officer Academy (NCOA); Senior Noncommissioned Officer Academy (SNCOA); and CMSgt Leadership Course (CLC).
5. Chief Enlisted Manager Code: This is the 5-digit code given to all personnel when they are promoted the rank of CMSgt.

6. Higher Headquarters (HHQ) – This denotes any organizational level higher than a work unit assigned to a single AF installation. These levels are numbered AF, Major Command (MAJCOM), and HQ United States AF, normally assigned to the pentagon in Washington DC or surrounding areas. Most AF installations are grouped into numbered AFs, and these are grouped into a specific MAJCOM. Additionally, there are several smaller agencies considered HHQ but not assigned to a particular MAJCOM.
7. Mission: The sending out of Air Force personnel to perform a special service. The Air Force mission is to defend the nation through the control and exploitation of air and space.
8. Senior Noncommissioned Officer (Senior NCO): This is a common name which refers to the top three enlisted grades mentioned earlier in this chapter. They are Chief Master Sergeant (CMSgt) (E9); Senior Master Sergeant (SMSgt) (E8); and Master Sergeant (MSgt) (E7).

Summary

This chapter provided an introduction to the purpose of this study, which, in short, is the determination of the significant behaviors of AF CMSgts employed on Randolph Air Force Base, located in San Antonio, Texas. Several issues surrounding the central theme of the study were mentioned. These subjects included statement of the problem, background, main research questions, limitations, assumptions, and significance of the study to name only a few.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Definition

Northouse (2001) advises that leadership is defined several different ways. In fact, there are as many leadership definitions as people who define it. For example, (Locke et al, 1991) says that leadership is a relational concept. In other words, if there are no followers, then there are no leaders. He goes on to state that leadership is a process because to lead the leader must first perform some type of action, and then motivate others to do the same.

Many people tend to use the words leadership and management interchangeably, but they are two distinct and complementary terms. The work of Taylor and Rosenbach (1992) supports this statement, arguing that leadership differs from management in a number of ways. Management is about coping with complexity, and is primarily concerned with functions such as planning, budgeting, organizing, and staffing. Gardner (1990) indicates that most managers exhibit some leadership skills and most leaders occasionally find themselves managing. Therefore, management is often considered a function of leadership.

Theory

Several leadership studies have been conducted over the years, resulting in the development of numerous theories, which can be divided into five areas: trait, behavioral, situational, contingency (transactional), and transformational (charisma).

Trait

According to Hersey and Blanchard (1988), trait research dates back to the late 1940s. It began as an attempt to determine a universal set of leadership traits for all situations. For example, a person possessing high energy, extensive job knowledge, and great communication skill was

considered a leader. Northouse (2001) believes certain individuals have special innate or born qualities, which differentiate them from non-leaders. Some of these include height, weight, and fluency of speech. Trait research considered leaders as possessing exceptional characteristics that were not shared by those being led.

Northouse (2001, p. 21) outlines the following strengths of trait research:

- Fits the idea of the leader being a special person with extraordinary gifts.
- Supported by research pointing to the important role of various personality traits in the leadership process.
- Foregrounds the leader, providing a deeper understanding of how personality is related to the leadership process.
- Offers benchmarks if someone wants to become a leader.

Another positive aspect of trait research is that not all leadership tendencies are present at birth, meaning that they can be established as teachable behaviors. For instance, communication skills can be enhanced through either formal training or in a more informal manner, such as participation in a speech or debate club such as Toastmasters.

Nevertheless, several problems were found with leadership trait studies. For instance, the sheer number of possible traits was overwhelming. More importantly, these traits were considered uniformly connected to specific behaviors and analyzed independently of particular situations (Edelson, 1992). Northouse (2001, p.22) also provides the following criticisms of trait studies:

- Do not establish a definitive list of leadership traits.
- Fail to take different situations into account.
- Do not view traits in relation to leadership outcomes. In other words, this approach does not address how traits affect group members and their work.

- Not a useful approach for training and development. This last criticism is important because an objective of this study was to provide sound recommendations for leadership behavior development.

Additional researcher issues include which traits make the list depends on the individual. Thus, desired traits are based on subjective opinion. Trait research also fails to make an appropriate distinction between personality traits and behaviors, instead it lumps them all together. For instance, several lists indicate extensive job knowledge as a leadership trait, but this is really a behavior acquired through occupational experience as individuals become more familiar with the subject area.

There is also the issue of leadership effectiveness. Just because a trait is associated with leadership does not result in the individual being an effective leader. Leadership effectiveness is determined by appropriate application of the trait at the right place, situation, and under consideration of other subordinate factors.

One last problem with trait research concerns the issue of measurement to determine trait appropriateness or effectiveness. The claim that a trait is associated with leadership fails to hold weight in the absence of an objective measure allowing for inferences to be drawn.

Behavioral

Leadership behavioral research, which also became popular in the late 1940s, focused on examining the relationships among leader behaviors, subordinate satisfaction, and performance. During this time, several behavioral-based studies were conducted, including those at Ohio State University and the University of Michigan. In the 1950s, Ohio State conducted extensive research resulting in the development of the Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire (LBDQ). LBDQ responses clustered around two general types of leader behaviors. The first, *initiating structure*,

were essentially task-related behaviors and the second, *consideration*, were relationship behaviors. Hundreds of individuals, including those in the military, were issued the LBDQ and LBDQ, Version II. During the same time period, University of Michigan researchers identified similar findings, categorizing them as production and employee orientation. *Production orientation* refers to leadership behaviors that emphasize technical and production aspects of a job, while *employee orientation* describes behaviors with a strong human relations emphasis. As a result of these studies, many early theories were based on the idea that behaviors are either task or relationship-based in nature. In practice, leaders use various levels of task and relationship behaviors, which can be characterized through the following designations:

- High task and relationship.
- Low task and relationship.
- High task and low relationship.
- Low task and high relationship (Hersey and Blanchard, 1988, p. 112).

Task and relationship behaviors are also dependent upon the subordinate's readiness level.

Readiness is the extent to which a subordinate has the ability and willingness to accomplish a task.

Ability is the follower's knowledge, experience, and skill regarding a specific task. *Willingness* is

the follower's confidence, commitment, and motivation to complete the task. Readiness levels are:

- Readiness Level 1: Unable and unwilling.
- Readiness Level 2: Unable but willing.
- Readiness Level 3: Able but unwilling.
- Readiness Level 4: Able and willing (Hersey and Blanchard, 1988, p. 171).

Thus, the success of the behavioral approach hinges on the actions of both leaders and followers.

The Continuum of Leader Behaviors, established in 1957 by Robert Tannenbaum and Warren H. Schmidt, indicated that leadership behaviors should be defined by more than just task and relationship behaviors. This theory asserts that leaders may employ several possible behaviors ranging from authoritarian to democratic, depending upon the forces interacting with the leader, follower, and situation. Potential leader behaviors are:

- Makes decision and announces it.
- Presents the problem, gets suggestions, and makes the decision.
- Presents tentative decisions that are subject to change.
- Sell decisions.
- Provides ideas and invites questions.
- Defines limits, but group makes the decision.
- Permits subordinates to function within the leader's defined limits (Hersey and Blanchard, 1988, p. 106).

Northouse (2001, p. 44) outlines the following strengths of the behavioral approach:

- A wide range of studies exist based on this theory.
- Individuals can assess their actions and determine how to change or improve behavior.
- Supports other approaches with the basic premise that despite the situation, the individual performs both task and relationship behaviors.

Unlike trait research, the behavioral approach introduced the notion of some observable action. If one can observe a behavior, strengths or weaknesses can be identified and appropriate action can be taken to effect change.

Behavior research also expresses concern for subordinates and other group members. Leadership, being a relational process, demands consideration of subordinates because

effectiveness, task completion, and mission accomplishment is the ultimate goal of any Air Force directive.

Despite this array of positive factors, Northouse (2001, p. 45) offers the following criticisms of the behavioral approach:

- Does not show how styles are associated with performance outcomes.
- Fails to find a universal style of leadership effective in every situation.

Another problem with leadership behavioral research, similar to trait research, is that within the approach behaviors are identified by humans based on their own subjective opinion. Even though a number of good behavior assessments exist, they are limited to behaviors identified within the assessment. Finally, appropriate application of selected behaviors is an issue. For instance, relying only on relational behaviors is not appropriate for all situations.

Situational

The situational leadership approach, unlike trait and behaviors' focuses on a definitive list and supports the notion that different situations demand different kinds of leadership behaviors. This approach stresses that leadership is composed of both a directive and a supportive dimension. To determine what is needed in a particular situation, the leader must evaluate subordinates and assess how competent and committed they are to perform a given task. Hersey and Blanchard (1988) developed the situational model to explain this theory, which is divided into two parts: *Leadership style* and *subordinate development*. Leadership style is further divided into four behavioral options: *directing, coaching, supporting, and delegating*. In general, the leader does not use the same behavior for all situations, but adapts his/her style depending on the commitment and competence level of the subordinate (Northouse, 2001).

Northouse (2001, p. 60) offers the following strengths of the situational approach:

- Offers a model which can be used for training.
- Easy to understand, which appeals to organizations.
- It tells what individuals should and should not do in various situations.
- Stresses leadership flexibility because the leader adapts their style to match the subordinate's commitment and competence level.

Northouse (2001, p. 61) highlights the following criticisms:

- Only a few studies conducted to support assumptions.
- Unclear how commitment is combined with competence to form subordinate levels.
- Fails to fully address individual versus group leadership. In other words, should a leader use a style matching the overall group or certain individuals within the group? If so, which members?

Situational leadership theory fails to acknowledge potential leader and situation mismatches. In other words, there are times when, despite an individual's best efforts, they are considered ineffective and non-leaders during the particular situation.

Contingency

Contingency theory, popularized by Fred Fielder in the 1960s, indicates that leadership effectiveness depends on how well the leader fits within the context of the situation. This approach reaches back to Kurt Lewin's work in field theory, which analyzed causal relations of behaviors, be they actual or potential, within interpersonal relationships. In general, contingency theory states that leadership is a transactional process in which effectiveness depends on matching the leader's style to the situation. Fielder developed his theory by studying the styles of leaders across different situations, primarily military organizations. His findings indicated that situations could be characterized by assessing three factors: *Leader-member relations*, *task structure*, and *position*

power. Leader-member relations refer to group atmosphere and the degree of confidence, loyalty, and attraction that followers feel toward the leader. Task structure refers to the degree to which the requirements of a task are clearly spelled out. Position power is the amount of authority the leader has to reward or punish followers. This includes the legitimate power an individual possesses due to their position within the organization. As a result, Fiedler introduced his Least Preferred Co-Worker (LPC) scale. By measuring the leader's LPC score, one could predict whether or not a leader was going to be effective within a particular situation (Northouse, 2001).

Northouse (2001, p. 79) provides the following strengths of the contingency approach:

- The theory is supported by a lot of empirical research. Many researchers believe it is a valid and reliable approach to explaining how effective leadership can be achieved.
 - Takes into account the impact of the situation on the leader.
 - The theory is predictive due to Fielder's LPC and situational factors.
 - Argues that leaders should not expect to lead in every situation. The key is for organizations to place leaders in situations suitable for their leadership style.
 - Provides data on the leader's style useful to organizations in developing leadership profiles.
- The LPC is one of several instruments used to determine how and where individuals can best serve within an organization.

Northouse (2001, p. 80) gives the following criticisms:

- Fails to fully explain why certain leadership styles are more effective in certain situations.
- Fails to fully explain what organizations should do when there is a mismatch between the leader and the situation in the workplace.
- Difficult to use in real-world settings because assessing the leader's style and situational variables requires using a separate instrument.

Transformational

Transformational leadership, which came to the forefront in the 1980s, emphasized the importance of vision and the ability to communicate this vision while simultaneously encouraging followers to make it a reality. This viewpoint challenged the traditional hierarchical nature of organizations and innate power of position within institutions. Individuals who employ this leadership are able to envision a future state and empower subordinates to achieve it.

Transformational leadership is supported by studies of charismatic leadership and is closely related to inspirational leadership (Edelson, 1992).

Northouse (2001, p. 158) presents the following strengths of transformational leadership:

- In recent years, this approach has received a lot of attention by researchers.
- Emphasizes the importance of followers in the leadership process.
- Goes beyond traditional models and places emphasis on morals and values.

Northouse (2001, p. 158) offers the following criticisms:

- Often interpreted too simply as an either/or approach.
- Creates a framework making it similar to the trait approach to leadership.
- Sometimes viewed as elitist and undemocratic.

Leader Behavior Measurement

There are several leadership behavior identification and measurement tools that organizations can use, mostly based on survey research, to assist in their leadership development efforts. The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire is one such tool. This assessment measures several behaviors and is touted as being appropriate for use across diverse organizations. For example, *Idealized Influence*, addresses several items, including as taking a stand on difficult issues and understanding

the ethical consequences of decisions. *Individualized Consideration* addresses considering the needs of others, listening attentively, and advising and coaching subordinates (Mind Garden, 2003).

Another leadership behavior assessment, the 59-item Lore Leadership Assessment, emphasizes many widely believed behaviors across five dimensions: *moral, intellectual, courageous, collaborative*, and *visionary/inspirational* (Lore International Institute, 2001).

The Competing Values Framework, established by Quinn 1988, describes the following eight major leadership roles: *innovator, broker, producer, director, coordinator, monitor, facilitator*, and *mentor*. These leadership roles are spread across two dimensions: *flexibility versus control* and *internal verses external organizational focus*. Quinn says the optimal leader profile is a demonstration of a high level of all behaviors included in his framework. Others argue a more realistic goal of the leader having the ability to increase or decrease specific behavior emphasis depending on the situation. This framework proposes that leadership behavior is categorized into one or more of these roles (Hunt, Dodge, and Wong, 1999).

The Leadership Effectiveness Analysis (LEA) looks at 22 sets of leadership behaviors grouped into six areas. It was designed by observing leaders and attempting to identify significant leadership behaviors in different situations. The LEA assesses leadership sets, which indicate the likelihood of the leader to behave in consistent ways within a broad range of leadership challenges. The ideal leader is competent across leadership sets, and capable of determining which behavior to focus on within a given situation. For example, *Team Playing* considers the following skill sets: *respecting authority, cooperation, consensual, and empathy* (Management Research Group, 2000).

The Afterburner Corporate Wingman Assessment addresses 22 potentially important leadership behaviors spread among five competencies: *leadership, organization, teamwork, communication*, and *discipline*. The leadership competency assesses integrity, internal and external scanning, vision,

and providing direction, judgment and decision making, driving change, inspiring others, and creating a positive work environment. (Murphy, 2002).

House and Mitchell developed the Path-Goal theory, an extension of the earlier work done at Ohio State. Their research focused on situations where initiating structure and consideration were not the most effective. The Path-Goal theory argues that leaders are effective due to their influence on a subordinate's motivation, ability to perform effectively, and goal satisfaction. The theory also suggests the motivation and satisfaction levels of a leadership attribute is dependent on the degree to which a specific behavior influences and clarifies the subordinate's path to goal attainment (Hersey and Blanchard, 1988).

The Contingency model, developed by Victor Vroom and Phillip Yetten, assumes that situational variables interact with the leader's personal attributes, resulting in leadership behavior that can effect organizational effectiveness. Essentially, the model is a 4-step approach during which (1) *Situational variables* such as time and job demands interact with (2) *Leader's personal attributes* such as experience and communication skills, resulting in (3) *Leader behavior* such as directive or supportive which (4) *Impact organizational effectiveness*. The leader utilizes the model by answering certain questions during the stages using an associated decision matrix. Behaviors are contingent upon the interaction between these questions and the leader's assessment of the situation (Hersey and Blanchard, 1988).

Locke et al (1991) present a leadership model developed from an integration of other studies, most of which are qualitative in nature. The model consists of four parts: (1) *Motives and traits*, (2) *Knowledge, skills, and abilities*, (3) *Vision*, (4) *Implementation of the vision*. This model is considered as encompassing all required leadership traits and actions. It assumes the specific situation will drive actual leadership behaviors to applicable portions of the model.

Three other related theories are *Role, Multiple-Influence, and Substitute*. Role theory asserts that leadership behavior is partly a function of role perceptions or what the leader assumes is expected of them. Perception is influenced by things such as written documents, communication from superiors, peers and, subordinates and personal experience. Superiors are arguably the most influential of the forces influencing leader role perception. Research indicates leaders are more responsive to superiors than subordinates when faced with conflicting role demands. Other research suggests that leaders may respond more readily to superiors concerning task behaviors, but respond to subordinates more in terms of social behaviors (Yukl and Van Fleet, 1986).

Multiple-Influence theory adds to Role theory by asserting that leader behavior is influenced more by macro (external) versus micro (internal) variables. This theory suggests that behaviors, beyond those influenced by leader's role perception, will adjust based on changing conditions in the environment, context, and the situation (Yukl and Van Fleet, 1986).

Substitute theory, associated with both Role and Multiple-Influence theories, argues that macro variables may even substitute or neutralize leadership behavior, making them unnecessary or redundant. For example, highly experienced subordinates may resent a leader attempting to provide them too much direction for a particular situation. In other words, subordinate experience substitutes for the leader's behavior (Yukl and Van Fleet, 1986).

Dr. Gary Yukl has contributed a great deal to the study of leadership behaviors. Of particular note is his development of the Managerial Practices Survey (MPS). In fact, AF leadership researchers have primarily utilized the MPS to determine a common set of significant Air Force officer leadership behaviors. Yukl was among the first to recognize the absence of a single set of leader behaviors from which researchers could compare results across different studies. He also noticed some commonality among the research and attempted to define a set of leadership behaviors

that was simultaneously broad enough to allow for recognition and relevance, specific enough to determine leadership effectiveness for a given situation, and valid enough to allow for correlation and comparison across studies. After completing a correlation study during which he found several commonalities among many leadership studies, Yukl set out to universally identify what leadership behaviors to measure. Yukl originally developed a list of 21 behaviors and later narrowed the list down to the following 11 behaviors within four broad categories:

Making Decisions

- **Planning & Organizing:** Determining long-term objectives and strategies for adapting to environmental change, deciding how to use personnel and allocate resources to accomplish objectives, considering ways to improve the efficiency of operations, and devising strategies for achieving coordination with other parts of the organization.
- **Problem Solving:** Identifying work-related problems, analyzing them in a timely but systematic manner to identify causes and find solutions, and acting decisively to implement solutions and resolve important problems or crises.
- **Consulting & Delegating:** Consulting people before making changes that affect them, inviting participation in the decision-making process by allowing others to have substantial responsibility and discretion in carrying out work activities and making decisions.

Influencing People

- **Motivating:** Using techniques that appeal to emotion, values, or logic to generate enthusiasm for the work; commitment to task objectives; and compliance with requests for cooperation, assistance, knowledge of support and resources; also setting an example of proper behavior.
- **Recognizing & Rewarding:** Providing praise, recognition, and rewards for effective performance, significant achievements, and special contributions.

Building Relations

- **Networking:** Socializing informally; developing contacts with people who are a source of information and support; maintaining contacts through periodic interaction including telephone calls, correspondence, and attendance of meetings and social events.
- **Managing Conflict & Team Building:** Encouraging and facilitating the constructive resolution of conflict, and encouraging cooperation, teamwork, and identification within the organizational unit.
- **Supporting & Mentoring:** Acting in a friendly and considerate manner, being patient and helpful, showing sympathy and support, and acting in a way that facilitates skill development and career enhancement.

Giving/Seeking Information

- **Monitoring Operations & Environment:** Gathering information about work activities, checking on the progress and quality of the work, evaluating the performance of individuals and the organizational unit, and scanning the environment to detect threats and opportunities.
- **Clarifying Roles and Objectives:** Assigning tasks, communicating a clear understanding of job responsibilities, task objectives, deadlines, and performance expectations, and directing others in their work.
- **Informing:** Disseminating relevant information about decisions, plans, and activities to effected personnel; answering requests for technical information and promoting the organizational unit (Berry, 1998, p.37)

Examples of Air Force officer leadership studies in which the MPS was successfully used include an investigation to determine significant leadership behaviors required of Air Force captains

across major career tracks. Berry (1998) sampled 647 captains and found the three most significant behaviors were informing, problem solving, and planning and organizing. The least significant was networking. Significant difference was also found between operations and support personnel. Hall (1994) conducted an exploratory analysis to determine significant leadership behaviors for cadet leaders at the Air Force Academy, in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Enriquez (1998) administered Yukl's MPS to over 1,000 officers to determine differences in leadership behaviors among lieutenants, captains, majors, and lieutenant colonels. His analysis showed that the 11 MPS leadership behaviors were relevant for all officer levels, but became more important as to personnel as they increased in rank. Additionally, Phelan (1998) administered the MPS to 302 majors and found significant evidence of the following behaviors: informing, planning and organizing, problem solving, and recognizing and rewarding.

Yukl's taxonomy offers several advantages. First, it includes most behaviors deemed important from previous research and contains more specific behaviors than earlier taxonomies. Earlier research indicated that leadership behaviors were categorized as either initiating/task/job/mission or consideration/relationship/people/social in nature. Northouse (2001) argues that two categories are not specific enough to describe all required leadership behaviors. Equally, Yukl (1981) asserts that more elaborate taxonomies, although an improvement, failed to include relevant aspects of leadership behavior such as providing praise and recognition, training and inspiration. A plausible solution to this problem is a set of behavior categories at an intermediate level, susceptible to a variety of measurement techniques such as questionnaires, diaries, observations, and critical incident classification. Secondly, Yukl's taxonomy has a higher degree of correlation with taxonomies used in previous studies. This allows for comparison of a common set of behaviors across studies to facilitate future research. Finally, it can be used to define significant leadership

behaviors under different circumstances. In this way, Yukl provides a construct not only for which behaviors to study, but also for how to study them through the use of a validated survey.

Content validity of Yukl's study, investigating the extent to which his MPS leadership behavioral items represent examples of leader behavior, was conducted in 1984-86 and 1988, which resulted in selected behaviors being accurately assigned to their respective categories. For these studies, coding accuracy ranged from 73% (Motivating) to 96% (Informing) leadership behaviors. Additional evidence of construct validity was demonstrated by administering the questionnaire to sample subordinates on two different occasions. Three studies of this type were conducted using different time intervals. Results indicated that construct validity was satisfactory with Pearson r measurements of .48 (Networking/Interfacing) to .94 (Supporting). Interrater reliability was evaluated using a one-way analysis of variance on each category score for 50 groups of subordinates having at least four subordinates describing the same leader. F-tests were significant at .01 for each of the categories (Clark and Clark, 2000).

Although Yukl's MPS has never been administered to CMSgt or other enlisted employees, there is a strong argument in the literature to support the use of MPS to test for leadership behavior significance across different organizational levels and situations. One big disadvantage is its predetermination of a finite set of leadership behaviors from which to ascertain leadership behavior significance. This leaves no way to test for the significance of other behaviors not addressed in the MPS.

Another AF document related to enlisted leadership development which outlines general responsibilities of CMSgts is Air Force Instruction (AFI) 36-2618, Enlisted Force Structure. These responsibilities are:

1. Provide highly effective leadership. A SNCO's primary purpose in the Air Force is accomplishing set missions through the management of an assigned team.
2. Translate the direction of upper level management into specific tasks and responsibilities that their teams understand and can execute. In other words, SNCOs should study the decisions of their own leaders and understand their rationale and goals so that they can fully leverage their personal experience and knowledge to more effectively accomplish the mission.
3. Be an active, visible leader. Develop their NCOs into better leaders and supervisors.
4. Deliberately grow and prepare their NCOs to be effective future SNCOs.
5. Help leadership make informed decisions. SNCOs must draw upon their knowledge and experience to provide constructive input, when appropriate, to best meet the challenges facing their organizations.
6. Support company grade officers' (CGO) continued development as leaders by sharing knowledge and experience, when appropriate, to best meet their personal challenges within their organizations.
7. Build professional relationships with CGOs, striving to create the most effective leadership teams to best accomplish the mission.
8. Exceed the standards and expectations levied upon their NCOs and Airmen. Epitomize excellence, professionalism, and competence, serving as a role model for NCOs and Airmen.
9. Ensure money, facilities, and resources are utilized in a manner that is efficient, effective, and in the best interests of the Air Force. Plan resource utilization, replenishment, and budget allocation to ensure personnel are provided the equipment and resources needed to effectively accomplish their mission.

10. Promote a culture of flexible Airmen capable of adapting to evolving Air Force requirements throughout their careers.
11. Consider, support, and encourage retraining as needed, therefore not only balancing the Air Force but also enabling the organization to meet mission requirements.
12. Consider, support, and encourage serving in special duties, including but not limited to first sergeant, military training instructor, recruiter, or PME instructor.
13. Continue professional development through a variety of means, such as studying books, voluntary career development courses, lectures, off-duty education, leadership seminars, etc. In doing this, embody the Air Force principle that personal professional growth never ends (United States Air Force, 2004, pg. 11).

The leadership assessments, models, theories, and frameworks mentioned earlier share a number of similarities:

- For most, validity and reliability information is scarce; most of those with data do not include any from military populations.
- All were designed primarily for use within the private (civilian) sector and fail to address potentially unique leadership behaviors for military (enlisted or officer) personnel.
- All contain behaviors which are task and relationship in nature, but indicate that behaviors are defined by more than just these dimensions.
- They agree on some leadership behaviors such as job expertise and communication skills.
- They mention other intervening variables that influence the leadership environment and potentially alter leadership behavior.
- They consider subordinates and group members as a crucial part of the leadership process.

There are differences as well:

- Although there are common leadership behaviors, there are several differences which make comparative analysis difficult.
- All contain a different number of leadership behaviors.
- Some mention *vision* and *change* while others ignore these aspects of leadership behavior.

Military Leadership Behaviors

The Air Force is not the only military service concerned about the leadership behaviors of its employees. All U.S. military services subscribe to long-held beliefs regarding effective leadership traits or behaviors.

The Navy's Leadership Competency Model is comprised of five core leadership competencies. A *competency* is defined as a behavior or set of behaviors depicting excellent performance in a work situation. These competencies are:

1. Accomplishing Mission. Stresses accountability and continuous improvement. It includes the ability to make timely and effective decisions and produce results through strategic planning, and the implementation and evaluation of programs and policies. Sub-competencies include: responsibility, accountability, decisiveness, risk management, continuous improvement, problem solving, and technical credibility.
2. Leading People. The ability to design and implement strategies that maximize personnel potential and foster high ethical standards in meeting the Navy's vision, mission and goals. Sub-competencies include: developing people, team building, combat/crisis leadership, conflict management, leveraging diversity, and professionalism.
3. Leading Change. Encompasses the ability to develop and implement an organizational vision that integrates key naval program goals, priorities, values, and other factors. Inherent is the ability to balance change and create a work environment that encourages

creative thinking and innovation. Sub-competencies include: creativity and innovation, vision, strategic thinking, external awareness, flexibility, service, and motivation.

4. Working with People. Involves the ability to explain, advocate, and express facts and ideas in a convincing manner, as well as negotiate with individuals and groups both internally and externally. Sub-competencies include: influencing and negotiating, partnering, political awareness, and oral and written communication.
5. Resource Stewardship. Involves the ability to acquire and administer human, financial, material, and information resources in a manner that instills public trust and accomplishes the Navy's mission. Using new technology to enhance decision-making. Sub-competencies include: financial management, leveraging technology, and human resource management (NLCM, 2004, p.1).

The Marine Corps subscribe to the following 14 leadership traits:

1. Justice. Defined as the practice of being fair and consistent. A just person gives consideration to each side of a situation and bases rewards or punishments on merit.
2. Judgment. Ability to think about things clearly, calmly, and in an orderly fashion, and make sound decisions based on this process of consideration.
3. Dependability. Being relied upon to perform duties properly. It means that you can be trusted to complete a job. Supporting the policies and orders of the chain of command. Consistently putting forth your best effort to achieve the highest standards of performance.
4. Initiative. Taking action even though you have not been given orders. It means meeting new and unexpected situations with prompt action. It includes using resourcefulness to get something done without the normal material or methods being available.

5. Decisiveness. Making sound decisions without delay. Getting all the facts and weighing them against each other. Announcing decisions in a clear, firm, professional manner.
6. Tact. Dealing with people in a manner that will maintain good relations and avoid problems. It describes a person that is polite, calm, and firm.
7. Integrity. Being honest and truthful in words and actions. Putting honesty, sense of duty, and sound moral principles above all else.
8. Enthusiasm. Having a sincere interest and exuberance in the performance of your duties. If a person is enthusiastic, then they are optimistic, cheerful, and willing to accept the challenges placed in front of them.
9. Bearing. The way a person conducts and carries themselves. Manner should reflect alertness, competence, confidence, and control.
10. Unselfishness. Not being comfortable at the expense of others. Practicing consideration of others. Giving credit to those who deserve it.
11. Courage. Remaining calm while recognizing fear. Moral courage means having the inner strength to stand up for what is right and to accept blame when something is your fault. Physical courage means continuing to function effectively when there is physical danger present.
12. Knowledge. Having an understanding of a science or art. Possessing the necessary acquired information and understanding people. Knowledge should be broad, and in addition to knowing the job, personnel should know their unit's policies and keep up with current events.

13. Loyalty. Being devoted to your country, the Corps, and to seniors, peers, and subordinates. The motto of the Corps is Semper Fidelis! (Always Faithful). Unwavering loyalty should be exercised up and down the chain of command.
14. Endurance. The mental and physical stamina measured by the ability to withstand pain, fatigue, stress, and hardship. For example, enduring pain during a conditioning march in order to improve stamina is crucial in leadership development (Marine Corps Leadership Traits, 2004, p.1).

The Coast Guard adheres to the following leadership behaviors:

1. Accountability and Responsibility. Understand the Coast Guard's character and structure as a military service committed to being "Always Ready". Recognize and use the chain of command appropriately. Understand the impact of behavior on others, the unit, and the Coast Guard organization. Take ownership of areas of responsibility. Use public resources efficiently.
2. Aligning Values. Understand and embody the Coast Guard's core values of Honor, Respect, and Devotion to Duty. Align personal behavior with the Coast Guard's core values and hold peers and subordinates accountable to them as well.
3. Followership. Understand that all Coast Guard personnel are followers. Look to leaders for guidance and feedback on performance. Seek and accept challenging tasks to learn and develop competence. Seek to understand others through listening and questioning. Work with leaders to ensure successful mission accomplishment.
4. Health and Well-Being. Promote a safe work environment. Recognize and manage stress. Set a personal health example emphasizing physical fitness and emotional strength. Encourage others to maintain health and well-being.

5. Personal Conduct. Personify high standards of honesty, integrity, trust, openness, fairness, and compassion. Be self-motivated, professional, and results-oriented. Have confidence in your own abilities and ideas. Learn personal strengths and weaknesses and use position and personal power appropriately.
6. Self-Awareness and Learning. Seek opportunities for self-development and life-long learning. Choose to learn and grow from experience. Adapt behavior and work methods to changing conditions and unexpected obstacles. Seek feedback on personal and professional strengths and areas for improvement. Learn to manage time effectively.
7. Technical Proficiency. Be prepared: learn, develop, and demonstrate technical and functional expertise in areas of responsibility. Understand how skills and actions contribute to mission readiness and performance. Keep current on technological advances. Effectively organize and prioritize tasks.
8. Influencing Others. Motivate others to achieve desired outcomes by directing, coaching, and delegating as the situation requires. Recognize the importance of building professional relationships. Develop networks of contacts and colleagues. Establish rapport with key players. Empower others by delegating power and responsibility and hold them accountable. Gain cooperation and commitment from others.
9. Respect for Others and Diversity Management. Understand and support the Coast Guard's commitment to respect every individual in the workplace. Recognize and promote the value of diversity, and foster an environment that supports diverse individuals and perspectives, fairness, dignity, compassion, and creativity in the workplace.

10. Looking out for Others. Recognize the needs and abilities of others, particularly subordinates. Ensure fair and equitable treatment. Provide opportunities for professional development. Recognize and reward performance.
11. Effective Communication. Learn to express facts and ideas succinctly and logically. Be an active and supportive listener and encourage open exchange of ideas. Communicate face-to-face when possible. Write clearly and concisely. Speak effectively before an audience. Distinguish between personal and official communication situations and act accordingly.
12. Group Dynamics. Build commitment, pride, team spirit, and strong relationships. Recognize and contribute to group efforts. Foster group identity and cooperation. Motivate and guide others toward goal accomplishment. Consider and respond to the needs and capabilities of others.
13. Leadership Theory. Study and understand different leadership theories and styles. Work with subordinates to develop their leadership knowledge and skills. Adapt leadership approaches to meet varying situations.
14. Mentoring. Assist others in their development by sharing experience and knowledge. Provide feedback to others on their leadership and career development. Help others identify professional goals, strengths, and areas for improvement.
15. Vision Development and Implementation. Set and work toward a vision for the unit, division, or department in line with the Coast Guard's overall vision, mission, strategy, and values. Establish and clearly communicate objectives. Initiate action and provide support and systems to achieve goals. Manage and champion organizational improvement.

16. Customer Focus. Focus on external requirements and actively seek feedback and suggestions and encourage others to do the same. Ensure internal and external customers' needs are met.
17. Decision-Making and Problem-Solving. Learn to identify and analyze problems under normal and extreme conditions. Learn to consider and assess risks and alternatives. Use facts, input from systems and others, and sound judgment to reach conclusions. Learn to lead effectively in a crisis keeping focus on key information and decision points. Commit to action; be as decisive as the situation demands. Involve others in decisions that effect them and evaluate the impact of your decisions.
18. Conflict Management. Encourage open communication about controversial issues. Promote collaboration to manage contention. Confront conflict constructively to minimize impact to self, others, and the organization.
19. Performance Appraisal. Use goal setting, delegation, and effective communication to manage performance effectively. Articulate performance expectations to subordinates. Coach and provide feedback to subordinates continuously. Document performance and seek performance expectations for yourself and your unit.
20. Management and Process Improvement. Use goals, milestones, and control mechanisms to measure and manage performance. Evaluate progress and outcomes of current processes. Seek continuous improvement through periodic assessments. Improve products and services to meet changing customer needs. Use formal reward systems to recognize positive performance and development.
21. Workforce Management Systems. Understand and support civilian and military promotion, advancement, and training, assignment, and award systems. Support

personnel working on advancement, special programs, training, and future assignments
(Coast Guard Leadership Competencies, 2004, p.1).

Military Leadership Development

As with the leadership model of the Air Force that was referred to in Chapter 1, those described by the institutional literature of the Navy, Marines and Coast Guard present several behaviors. Most of these are found in other leadership studies, thus giving them at least some “face” validity as effective leader behaviors. Although the models have merit, there are differences and problems with these models:

- There is no research basis for the majority of the leadership behaviors mentioned.
- Each contains a different number of leader behaviors.
- Each contains behaviors not mentioned in other models.
- They fail to differentiate between officer and enlisted behaviors.
- The models resemble a wish list of desired core values, personality traits, and behavior verses an objective model.
- None have an associated action plan to ensure the desired behaviors are taught to aspiring leaders.

The Army has taken its leadership development to the next level through the creation of its own leadership behavior assessment. The Army's AZIMUTH Leadership Check is a joint development effort between the Army Research Institute (ARI), Army War College, and Industrial College of the Armed Forces (ICAF) under the direction of Dr. Jacobs, who developed Strategic Systems Theory with Dr. Jacques. The original AZIMUTH instrument focused on senior ranking officers at the strategic level. Later, additional items were added which purport to make the assessment more applicable for all levels of leadership. The AZIMUTH assesses the following

leadership behaviors: *interpersonal focus, team focus, mission focus, problem solving, knowledge, planning/organization skills, political skills, ethics, communication/influence, and social maturity*. Three negative type behaviors are also assessed due to their potential impact on leadership ability (Halpin and Karrasch, 2003).

Another Army led initiative, The Baseline Officer Longitudinal Data Set (BOLDS), developed jointly by ARI and United States Military Academy (USMA), allows researchers to study leadership over time. The BOLDS consists of data gathered from military cadets (officers in training) from the Class of 1998. It uses measures from ten broad dimensions considered important to leader development: *cognitive aptitude, complex problem-solving skills, tacit knowledge of military leadership, temperament, motivation, leadership style, leadership performance, physical fitness, cognitive-emotional identity development, and developmental experiences*.

The overall objectives of the BOLDS research are to:

- Identify the cognitive, personality, and/or social factors that contribute to the development of good Army leaders.
- Describe changes over time in the leadership performance of individuals.
- Identify experiences that contribute to leader development.

The BOLDS researchers advise that initial data collection was difficult because all variables did not exist for each cadet. The sampling scheme used to administer measures sought to reduce cadet participation time and the effects of repeated measurements. Additionally, some of the variables reside at the USMA, but not in ARI's database. Other measures exist as scale scores rather than as item values and some measures had yet to be scored. Despite these shortcomings, the extensive database continues to grow and researchers continue to analyze its contents, and as such it may offer good insight into leadership development (Milan, Bourne, Zazanis, and Bartone, 2002).

Although the AZIMUTH and BOLDS make the Army a pacesetter concerning the study of military leadership, there is no reliability or validity information available because both assessments are still in the infancy stages of development. To date, both have an officer rather than an enlisted focus, and no new developmental information could be found for these initiatives.

Yukl's taxonomy and associated Managerial Practice Survey (mentioned in Chapter 1) incorporates behaviors that are of particular importance to military leaders. In fact, his works are virtually the only studies which attempt to validate military leadership behaviors. To accomplish this, Yukl and Van Fleet conducted four studies to identify effective patterns of leader behavior for Air Force officers and officer candidates. Two studies utilized a questionnaire and the other two analyzed critical incidents during combat, simulated combat, and non-combat situations. These studies concluded that *performance emphasis*, *inspiration*, *role clarification*, and *discipline* are important during combat and non-combat situations. *Planning and problem solving* are also important in dynamic and uncertain combat situations. Finally, *consideration* is important for maintaining effective leader-follower relations (Yukl and Van Fleet, 1986).

Hunt, Dodge, and Wong (1999) indicated that some progress has been made in the research into military leadership, but there is still the array of issues mentioned earlier. Possible solutions include:

- Use of multiple data collection methods in the same study to overcome the limitations of each method.
- Intensive, longitudinal field studies to understand how leadership processes change and occur over time.
- Longitudinal field experiments to verify causality and show that some leadership behaviors are related to objective measures of unit effectiveness (p. 258).

Leadership Development

Lynham (2000, p.12-1) outlines eight core 'knowns' about leadership development:

1. Leadership development occurs in early childhood and adolescent development.
2. Formal education plays a key role in leadership development.
3. On-the-job experiences are important for the development of leadership.
4. Leadership development also occurs through specialized leadership education.
5. Leadership training focuses on three specific areas: improving leader attitudes, leader success and effectiveness, and leader styles.
6. There are a number of factors than can act as potential barriers to the effectiveness of leadership development.
7. Leadership development is a life-long process.
8. Leadership development is often confused with management development.

Item numbers 2 through 7 are greatly supported in adult education literature.

McCauley, Moxley, and Van Velsor (1998) state leadership development is the process of expanding a person's capacity to be effective in leadership roles and processes. This definition implies that individuals can expand their leadership through the intervention of education and training. This supports a primary research assumption of this study that leadership behaviors can be taught to individuals. McCauley, Moxley, and Van Velsor offer a model to summarize their viewpoint concerning leadership development. *Part A* of the model is comprised of three elements that contribute to developmental experiences. These elements are assessment, challenge, and support. *Assessment* information points out the gaps between a person's current capacity or performance and some desired end-state. This information can help clarify what must be learned, improved, or changed. *Challenging* experiences force people out of their comfort zone and give

them an opportunity to develop new capabilities. *Support* gives individuals the impetus to change and is a key factor in maintaining motivation to learn and grow. *Part B* of the model shows that leadership development is a process requiring a variety of developmental experiences and the ability to learn from experience. Being engaged in a developmental experience can enhance a person's ability to learn and lead to more developmental experiences. McCrauley, Moxley, and Van Velsor also suggest using an approach that integrates the various developmental experiences and embeds them within an organizational context.

An obvious question for the readers of this study concerns the issue of what exactly to do with the results. Speculation indicates that adult education methods could be useful in producing positive leadership behavioral changes in CMSgts. Moreover, adult education considers the military organization as a form of educational typology; or in other words, a non-educational organization whose primary mission is not itself educational, but uses education as a means to some form of goal completion (Merriam and Brockett, 1997).

Merriam and Brockett (1997) offer several definitions of adult education that support its use as an appropriate guide to leadership development. One definition states that *adult education* is an intentional set of activities designed to facilitate learning for those whose age, social roles, or self-perception define them as adults (p.8). CMSgts are individuals within the intellectual and chronological range of those in adulthood. More importantly, *human resource development (HRD)*, often considered an off-shoot of adult education, is an umbrella term often used by practitioners to denote the training, education, and development of employees in the workplace. Lynham (2000) supports this assertion by claiming leadership development is a component of HRD. She states that billions of dollars are spent each year on leadership development by U.S. companies. From this

viewpoint, adult education is a primary tool for skill-development courses, on-the-job and workplace training, and management training.

Any consideration of leadership development must mention the concept of andragogy, a term fore-grounded through the work of Malcolm Knowles. Merriam and Brockett (1997) describe *andragogy* as the art and science of helping adults learn. This is in contrast to *pedagogy*, which describes helping children in their learning (p.85). Lieb (2001) outlines Knowles' characteristics of adult learners: they tend to be autonomous and self-directed, possess a wealth of life experience and knowledge, are goal-oriented, need a reason for learning, and prefer learning things of practical value. Although there are valid arguments as to the uniqueness of these claims, Knowles' efforts to make a distinction for adults within the learning environment are considered as being seminal work in the field of adult education.

The notion of self-directed learning is of particular importance within Knowles' assessment of the adult learner. Confessore and Kops (1998) describe *self-directed learning* as individual actions which are directed or controlled to gain knowledge and understanding, solve problems, and aim at achieving skill development. They cite a number of works linking self-directed learning to leadership development and consider it a critical skill for leaders, primarily because they use it when job assignments require considerable change.

One final issue concerning adult education is the notion of learning from experience. In his seminal work entitled "Experience and Education," John Dewey claims that all genuine education comes from experience, which contains two principles: continuity and interaction. *Continuity* represents modification of knowledge gained from the experience, while *Interaction* describes a transaction between an individual and their environment. Later researchers built on Dewey's claim, arguing that experience requires four kinds of abilities:

1. Concrete experience. Willingness to expose oneself to new experiences.
2. Reflective observation. Observational and reflective skills so these new experiences can be viewed from a variety of perspectives.
3. Abstract conceptualization. Analytical abilities so that integrative ideas and concepts can be created from their observation.
4. Active experimentation. Decision-making and problem solving skills so these new ideas and concepts can be used in actual practices (Merriam and Caffarella, 1999).

One other theory related to learning from experience is *situated cognition*. This concept describes a perspective of human cognition that asserts learning happens as human beings interact with the living world. Some think of this theory as thinking "on the fly" and "in the moment," rather than off line and mainly in our heads. Furthermore, activities, tasks, functions, and understandings do not exist in isolation; they are part of broader systems of relations in which they have meaning. These systems of relations arise out of and are reproduced and developed within social communities, which are in part systems of relations among persons (Wikipedia, 2009).

The cognitive apprenticeship is a model of learning based on the situated cognition theory. It provides practical three steps for applying situated cognition theory. They are: (1) Students are required to articulate their reasoning or methods to solve a problem; (2) Students are encouraged to reflect on and learn from others' approaches; (3) Teacher fades supports as students apply their learning to personally relevant problems. The general argument here is even today, many complex and important skills, such as those required for language use and social interaction, are learned informally through apprenticeship like methods such as observation, coaching, and successive approximation (Situating Cognition, 1999).

Hunt, Dodge, and Wong (1999) list a number of methods which can be used to enhance military leadership development and learning from experience. These include use of *special assignment*, *multi-rater feedback*, *developmental assessment centers*, *action learning*, *realistic field exercises*, and *after-action reviews*. *Developmental assessment centers* may provide great feedback for aspiring leaders, but are very costly. *Action learning* is used to link formal training to learning from experience. In general, the individual meets with others in a small group setting to work on an applied problem over several months. This is normally integrated within the operational assignment. Computer networking or teleconferencing can be used as an alternative approach to meeting at a single location.

Gardner (1990) provides some interesting recommendations concerning leadership development. He asserts that individuals should pursue a liberal arts education to broaden their understanding of community and society. Gardner suggests that today's leaders must possess knowledge of economics, political process, and managing conflict. In addition, outside classroom programs such as Stanford University's Public Service Center and Leadership America offer significant leadership experiences.

Conger and Benjamin (1999, p. 33) provide some guidelines for planning leadership development programs:

1. Build around a single well-delineated leadership model. A lack of consensus about leadership training requirement results in the incorporation of several leadership dimensions into the plan, which may overwhelm participants. Using multiple models increase the possibility that participants will forget essential components or find themselves confused about differing framework. A well-defined model provides more opportunities to explore in depth the various dimensions of a given approach.

2. Conduct Pre-course Preparation. Allows individuals to carefully contemplate their own leadership style and consider the application of course knowledge back in the workplace. Participants may see links between their daily challenges and the training program.

3. Use personalized 360-degree feedback to reinforce learning. This is important for development because as leaders progress in the organization they have fewer opportunities to obtain feedback on how they are perceived by other employees.

4. Use multiple learning methods. Adult learning theory suggests that individuals differ in their learning styles. Using different instructional techniques increase the chance that a particular method is compatible with an individual's learning style. Conger and Benjamin outline four adult training approaches:

a. Conceptual awareness. Acquiring mental models to enable the learner to grasp different leadership dimensions.

b. Feedback. Enables learners to identify their strengths and weaknesses.

c. Skill building. Focuses on the visible, behavioral skill development.

Participants practice leadership competencies associated with effective leadership. An advantage of this approach is it attempts to turn leadership into a set of teachable behavioral skills.

d. Personal growth. Employs emotional and physical challenges to facilitate reflection on behaviors and life choices. These experiences help trainees discover their natural tendencies in an environment of risk and teamwork.

Outward Bound is such a program.

5. Conduct extended learning periods and multiple sessions. Information learned during multiple training periods is generally retained longer than from a one-time program. This has been proven during several activities such as art, chess, medicine, music, physics, and sports.

6. Put organizational support systems in place. A concern here is the workplace's lack of reinforcement of the individual's newly acquired leadership behaviors. The attitude and management style of the individual's supervisor is considered the most important factor in determining support of leadership behaviors.

Weaver (2001) expresses a concern for supervisor support as well. She argues that lack of supervisor support is the reason most developmental programs fall short of its goal. She states that desired leadership behaviors must be incorporated into the entire organization, be consistent, and ensure that individuals are rewarded for their use.

Weaver (2001, p. 60) offers the following leadership development recommendations:

- Incorporate leader development concepts in all organizational levels and ensure transformational as well as transactional leadership is taught, encouraged, and that individuals are rewarded for appropriate use.
- Utilize reliable periodic feedback systems to reinforce appropriate behaviors and identify weaknesses.
- Obtain feedback via organization-wide climate surveys. This is a key indicator of organizational health as it includes employee perceptions and attitudes toward their job.

Results from a 1999 Air Force-wide survey indicated that some leaders do not understand its importance in improving the work environment.

Hall (1995, p. 44) adds other factors to consider when establishing leadership training programs:

- Personal attributes of the trainees.
- Desire of the trainees.
- Composition of the training group.
- Follow-up strategies.
- Behavior of the trainer.

Although several leadership development models exist, adult education literature finds that practitioners rarely find them useful for program planning. Most planners design their programs within the parameters of organizational constraints, available resources, company politics, and employee resistance to change.

Gardner (1990) indicates that most organizational leadership development efforts are accomplished during the normal workday. Cofer (2000) describes *informal workplace learning* as learning which takes place in everyday experience, often at subconscious levels, and not determined or designed by the organization. He cites a study which indicates about 70% of what people know about their jobs is learned informally at work; this has direct implications for leadership development. Gardner offers the following as opportunities for individuals to accumulate leadership experiences within the workplace:

- Peer interaction can teach teamwork, how to deal with hostility, and when to compromise or hold firm on a position.
- Reassignment of individuals to different jobs, called career broadening, periodically exposes them to new and different challenges.
- Off-site experiences remove individuals out of familiar settings and can expose them to different leadership growth opportunities. For example, the Center for Creative Leadership (CCL) conducts seminars and workshops, assesses leadership skills, and provides training

sessions designed for the development of leaders. In fact, the Air Force has sent its senior officers and has begun to send a few CMSgts to CLC. The American Leadership Forum is another example of such a program (Garner, p.112).

This experience model is viewed as interrelated phases within a cyclical process starting with a concrete experience and progressing to active experimentation. Later, a fifth step, *planning for implementation*, was inserted between steps 3 and 4 to represent time for action planning. The skills mentioned in the model cite several behaviors found in many leadership behavior models; Yukl's MPS is one example (Merriam and Caffarella, 1999).

There is more agreement concerning leadership development approaches than on desired leadership behaviors. Ideas such as the infusion of appropriate behaviors throughout the organization, supervisor support, utilization of the workplace as a training ground, and participation in external experiences are commonly found in leadership developmental recommendations. However, the consideration of time, cost, and other resources needed to secure employee participation is often forgotten. Additionally, none offer developmental techniques specifically for CMSgts or other military enlisted personnel.

One other important leadership development tool is the use of history. Hooper (2002, p. 17) outlines several lessons, which can be learned through this method:

- *Understanding Airmen.* History can show differences and provide insight into expectation, values belief, and typical employee behaviors.
- *Unit dynamics.* History enables leaders to see how strong units were formed and organized in the past, and how successful leaders fostered teamwork, *esprit de corps*, and solved problems.

- *Combat conditions.* History can help leaders understand the impact of combat conditions and show which leadership techniques have proven to be successful during both peace and wartime.
- *War fighting and military operations.* History helps leaders understand campaign planning, role of air and space power, and sheds light on organizational doctrine.
- *Operating environments.* With units deploying to foreign countries, an understanding of the historical contexts that form a unit's operation, as well as insight into the cultural knowledge of the local population and knowledge of its decision-making processes may prove beneficial to leaders.
- *Leader responsibilities and challenges.* Provides a forum for examining previous leader actions giving insight into the reason for specific decisions.
- *Enduring aspects of leadership.* The foundations of human leadership have remained constant throughout history. As a result, history provides insight into enduring aspects such as vision, building trust and teamwork, and motivation.

Looking at the history of organizational leadership provides leaders with the organization specific knowledge needed to round out any leadership development program. The military is a very unique organization, meaning that commercially produced programs often ignore leadership behaviors specific to its environment. Merriam and Brockett (1997) agree that history has practical value because it suggests what has worked, not worked, reasons why or why not, and options for consideration.

Summary

This chapter provided a literature overview of the major subject areas addressed throughout the study. Leadership theory, military leadership behaviors, assessment instruments, and leadership development were the main topics for discussion. Additionally, adult education theory was discussed within the leadership development section.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Introduction

The research methodology used for this dissertation is described in this chapter. In the following sections, rationale for utilizing qualitative research, characteristics of qualitative research, researcher roles, qualitative indicators, data collection, and the research process will be discussed.

Rational for Utilizing Qualitative Research

To date, there have been no academic studies conducted to determine significant active duty Air Force (AF) Chief Master Sergeant (CMSgt) leadership behaviors. Krathwohl (1998) indicates that the qualitative method is most effective when little is known about a phenomenon. Moreover, this method is more suitable when emphasis is on discovery rather than validation and no standardized instrument is available, or it would be extremely difficult to construct. Straus and Corbin (1990) also agree, claiming that qualitative methods can be used to better understand any phenomenon about which little is known.

Miller and Salkind (2002) state that qualitative research offers several alternatives which facilitate open-ended learning to better ascertain both the meaning of and participant views within a study. Merriam and Associates (2002, pg. 5) firmly support this notion, and provide several key characteristics of the qualitative research design:

1. The researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis.
2. The researcher strives to understand the meaning people have constructed about their world and experiences.
3. The process is inductive in nature (explore to discover).

4. The product of qualitative research is richly descriptive. Words and pictures rather than numbers are used to convey what the researcher learns.

As a result, a qualitative research approach was utilized due to the exploratory nature of this study.

There are several kinds of qualitative research approaches. Merriam and Associates (2002) describes eight of the more common approaches: basic interpretive, phenomenology, grounded theory, case study, ethnography, narrative, critical analysis, and postmodern / poststructural.

Lancy (1993) states the phenomenological approach comes from the field of sociology. This approach avoids assumptions and the use of reactive instruments that may potentially influence the study. Instead, the research looks at the phenomenon with an open mind. Thus, activities such as observation, recording, and interviews are common data gathering methods. Merriam and Associates add that the researcher is primarily interested in showing how complex meaning is built from experience. These experiences are bracketed, analyzed, and compared to identify all aspects of the phenomenon. Furthermore, the researcher must decide how and in what way his or her personal experiences will be introduced into the study. Because this study delved into the leadership experiences of AF CMSgts, a phenomenological qualitative research approach was the researcher's method of choice.

Characteristics of Qualitative Research

Bogdan and Biklen (1992), Creswell (1998), Lincoln and Guba (1985), Merriam and Associates (2002), and Patton (1990) offer the following characteristics of qualitative research:

1. Begins with a single focus and uses the natural setting as the source of data. It has an emergent (as opposed to pre-determined) design.

2. [The researcher] employs a tradition of inquiry, acting as the human instrument of data collection, to observe, describe, and interpret settings as they are, while at the same time maintaining empathic neutrality.
3. Concerned with process rather than simply outcomes or products and use purposive sampling and rigorous data collection procedures in an effort to discover and understand the meaning people have constructed for their world and their experiences.
4. Collects data and analyzes it inductively at the same time. This is an important factor in the dynamic nature of the research.
5. Research is interpretive, resulting in a negotiated outcome that is developed by both the individuals who experience the phenomena and the researcher who is reporting the findings.
6. Reports are very descriptive and clear. They are written clearly and incorporate expressive language.
7. The research is judged using special criteria for trustworthiness.

All these characteristics are not present in every qualitative research study, but most will be visible.

Role of the Qualitative Researcher

The researcher's primary role in a qualitative study is to act as the data-gatherer and analyzer.

Hoepfl (1997) claims that before conducting a qualitative study, the researcher must initially do two things. First, the researcher must develop the level of skill appropriate for a human instrument, or the vehicle through which data will be collected and integrated. Finally, they must prepare a research design that utilizes accepted strategies for naturalistic inquiry.

Qualitative Indicators

Krathwohl (1998) indicated that qualitative research design requires the following criteria: credibility, transferability, and dependability to evaluate rigor and trustworthiness. He offers these terms as the qualitative equivalents for the conventional (quantitative) terms of internal and external validity, reliability, and objectivity. The following section will describe how the researcher addressed the four qualitative design considerations.

Credibility

Krathwohl (1998) states that credibility or internal validity refers to whether or not the evidence of study supports existence of a relationship between or among its variables. In other words, how truthful are the findings of the study. Several strategies improve the chances that findings and interpretations are credible. When these strategies are used together, they offer increased research triangulation muscle (Lancy, 1993). For this study, the researcher utilized the following strategies: a secondary reviewer, member checks, referential adequacy, and an editor (Merriam and Associates, 2002), (Krathwohl, 1998) (Byrne, 2001a).

A secondary reviewer was solicited to conduct a comprehensive review of the transcription data collected during this study. Kimberley Rolf was the person who conducted the review of the data. She was selected because she holds a masters degree in history and has considerable experience reviewing qualitative data. Furthermore, Kimberley has no personal or professional connection with the participants of this study.

Member checks involved giving each participant a copy of their interview transcript and associated researcher interpretation. This enabled the participant to make further input and clarify issues as appropriate.

Referential adequacy was satisfied by digitally-recording all interviews. The researcher cross-checked the digital recordings with the transcripts for accuracy of the information.

Transferability

Krathwohl (1998) describes transferability, often referred to as external validity, as the results from one study being related to other similar studies. In quantitative research, large, random samples are employed to secure transferability, referred to as generalizability. In qualitative research, the researcher uses richly descriptive words, called *thick descriptions*, coupled with adequate information about the situation and variables to better facilitate replication of the study and enhance transferability of finding(s) (Merriam and Associates, 2002). Byrne (2001a) describes thick descriptions as richly described data that provides enough information to judge the themes, labels, categories, and constructs of a study. Additionally, they provide enough information for reviewers to ascertain the appropriateness of applying the finding to other similar studies. This study used thick descriptions (participants own words) along with other methodology discussed in this chapter to enhance transferability to similar populations.

Dependability

Often called reliability, dependability considers whether the same study, given the same variables, will yield the same results each time (Krathwohl, 1998). This is very difficult to ascertain in qualitative research because the researcher is often the study's research instrument and participant behavior is not static, and their experiences are rarely exactly the same. To enhance dependability, the researcher has maintained all files, transcripts, audiotapes, and other material designed, collected, and used during all phases of the study.

Interrator reliability, often considered a subset of this area was addressed by having a secondary reviewer look at all data material before a final decision was made on the significant findings of this study.

Confirmability

Confirmability, or objectivity, refers to the consistency of the researcher's interpretation of the evidence (data). Moreover, it is concerned with the researcher's ability to present the evidence in a fair and impartial way. Besides measures addressed during the credibility discussion, the use of an audit trail allows other examiners to track decisions made and steps taken during the study. An audit trail consists of a researcher journal, original data (audiotapes, notes), early data interpretation or analysis, research reports, and any communication with participants and the secondary rater. The researcher has maintained all audit trail information as part of this research study (Krathwohl, 1998 and Byrne, 2001a).

Trustworthiness

The criteria mentioned earlier - credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability - are considered critical throughout the qualitative literature to secure trustworthiness. Furthermore, Krathwohl (1998) and Byrne (2001b) argue that scientific rigor in quantitative research equates to trustworthiness in qualitative research. They also make a good case for the importance of compiling an audit trail so other researchers can follow the study researcher's path to determine plausibility of the findings and conclusions of the study. The audit trail must document the researcher's decisions and actions from the beginning to the end of the study.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine significant leadership behaviors of active duty Air Force (AF) Chief Master Sergeants (CMSgt) stationed at Randolph Air Force Base (AFB), Texas.

United States Air Force (1999) states that CMSgts perform as superintendents and managers, and provide senior enlisted leadership at all AF organizational levels. Despite this proclaimed leadership significance of CMSgts, literature and associated research studies are primarily focused on officers, with very little research addressing enlisted leadership behaviors. Additionally, while recent studies have been accomplished to provide a research basis for officer leadership, no such support exists for enlisted leadership development. Semi-structured interviews, interview guide, literature research, and several quality indicators mentioned earlier were utilized to ensure findings were as fair and balanced as possible despite the limitations of the study.

Research Questions

This study used the following questions as a means to guide all research efforts:

1. What sources can be used to ascertain active duty Air Force CMSgt leadership behaviors?
2. Is there a common set of behaviors?
3. If there are such behaviors, which adult learning methods facilitate their acquisition?

Research Process

As mentioned earlier, the phenomenological approach formed the basis of this study and the semi-structured interview was the primary method used to collect data.

Sampling

For this study, purposeful sampling was used to find volunteer participants. Byrne (2001c) and Krathwohl (1998) argue that for qualitative research, purposeful rather than random sampling enables the researcher to choose who they consider as the best informants of the phenomenon. The following paragraphs will outline specific sampling approaches for this study.

1. Criterion. LeCompte, Preissle, and Tesch (1993) state that predetermined criteria should be used to identify participants for inclusion in a study. This is the starting point for all qualitative research. Participants for this study were active duty AF CMSgts working on Randolph AFB, Texas, who have at least 24 years military service, have performed in at least two separate jobs as a CMSgt, and hold at least an associates degree. Rationale for this criteria was based on the following Air Force Personnel Center (2006) data:
 - a. Average time in service for those selected for CMSgt promotion is 22.63 years. The 24 years of service provides a significant pool of eligible CMSgts who have approximately two years job experience at this rank.
 - b. Just over 94% of CMSgts hold at least an associates degree. In fact, statistics reveal a direct correlation between holding an associates degree and competitiveness for promotion to the higher enlisted grades.
 - c. Finally, the researcher's experience indicated that CMSgts who have work experience in at least two jobs will offer a better perspective of leadership behaviors that are significant at their current enlisted rank. The reason behind this is that, in most instances, individuals experience a period of transition between CMSgt sew-on of their stripes and really understanding the impact that a person performing at this level has on work center performance and organizational effectiveness. This last item was an assumption of the researcher.
 - d. Air Force Personnel Center (2006) indicates there are a total of 2,686 active duty CMSgts, of which 299 are females. As a result, the researcher did interview a few female CMSgts. Race and ethnicity was not primary focal point of this study due to the sheer number of CMSgts with different ethnic and racial backgrounds. This

could be a focus of future studies, as an argument could be made that certain CMSgts employ leadership behaviors due to their race or ethnicity in relation to the race or ethnicity of superior and subordinate employees. That being said, all information gathered for this study relating to participant's race and ethnicity is part of the audit trail, which could serve as a spring board for future studies of this nature.

2. Snowball. According to Krathwohl (1998), snowball sampling is used to discover additional study participants by asking other participants for recommendations of individuals they believe would be beneficial to the study. For this study, the plan was to call volunteer participants with a goal to initially identify about 20 CMSgts. Prior to and during the interview phase, the researcher asked participants if they knew other CMSgts (meeting the criteria) who they believe would be useful to this study. Some participants involved in this study were derived from the use of snowball sampling.
3. Convenience. Convenience sampling, as the name implies, is selecting a sample of participants most accessible for a study. For this study, participants were employed on Randolph AFB, Texas. The researcher was also employed on Randolph and as such had direct access to this population.

Pilot Study phase

Byrne (2001c) and Krathwohl (1998) advise that individuals with little qualitative research experience should first pilot test their study. A pilot study is a *study before the study* that is conducted in order to fine tune instruments and attempt to resolve other issues (sample size, terms, etc...) impacting the study. The results of the pilot study were used to modify the sampling criteria, research instrument, research questions, etc. While completion of a pilot study did not guarantee

success of the actual study, it does increase the likelihood of success by identifying unforeseen problems.

For this study, the researcher solicited four volunteer pilot study participants from the pool of those initially contacted via telephone: two male and female participants. Information about these individuals and other participants is included in Chapter 4 of this dissertation.

Interview phase (Data Collection)

There are several means for collecting data during a qualitative study. Krathwohl (1998) mentions the following: observation, interviews, diaries, personnel records, artifacts. Others include photographs, poetry, video and audiotapes.

Cassel and Symon (2004), Krathwohl (1998), Merriam and Associates (2002), Byrne (2001b), and LeCompte et al., (1993) indicate that the interview is a common data-gathering method in qualitative research. Krathwohl (1998, pg. 286) cite the following reasons for using the interview as a means for gathering data:

1. Exploring, probing, and searching to determine what is especially significant about a person or situation.
2. Determining how individuals perceive their situation, its meaning to them, what is especially significant about it, what might be significant to others but is less so or unimportant to them, how it came to be what it is, and how they think it will be changed in the future.
3. Identifying the cause in cause and effect relationships.
4. Finding explanations for discrepancies between observed and expected effects.
5. Finding explanations for deviations from common behaviors by individuals or subgroups.
6. Providing clues to the processes and mechanisms called into play by the situation.
7. Making sure the respondent correctly understands what was asked.

8. Following up on incomplete or non-responsive answers.
9. Getting responses from individuals who might not respond to or might not understand a questionnaire.

Cassel and Symon (2004) claim that interviews allow the researcher to see how and why people come to have their particular perspective. Moreover, interviews should have a degree of structure, contain mostly open-ended questions (require answering more than yes or no), and focus on specific situations and actions occurring within the interviewee's world.

LeCompte et al., (1993) indicate that interview type or categories are based on (1) type of person or (2) structure and administration of the interview. The majority are based on the purpose or structure of the interview. Krathwohl (1998) mentions five interview types based on structure: unstructured, partially structured, semi-structured, structured, and totally structured. Most qualitative literature mention three interview structure types: totally structured, semi-structured, and unstructured interviews, each with a decreased amount of preplanned questions and other preparation, other than establishing the purpose of the interview. Merriam and Associates (2002) follow that a semi-structured interview is best when specific information is desired from all participants, but time is also required to explore other issues which could emerge during the interview.

Krathwohl (1998, pg. 298) offers the following tips when conducting an interview:

1. Identify yourself and set the respondent at ease.
2. The respondent's reaction often mirrors that of the interviewer. The respondent will know if he/she is uncertain and uneasy. A pleasant, positive, well-informed approach will be reflected in the interviewee's readiness to respond.
3. If longer and detailed responses are required, reinforce those kinds of answers.

4. To teach and motivate the respondent, use feedback expressions like these: “Thanks, this is the sort of information we’re looking for in this research.”
5. Master the probe: repeat the question; give an expectant pause (an expectant nod of the head); possibly repeat, summarize, or reflect the feeling tone of the reply. Say: “Anything else?” “How do you mean?” “Could you tell me more about it?”
6. When probing recall, use probes that give memory cues of items likely to be forgotten. For example, if probing hospitalization, say, “Well, people quite frequently forget. It is more difficult to remember just an overnight hospitalization, for instance. Was there any chance you had something like this?”
7. When overtly interviewing, sit in a comfortable spot where you can record the responses verbatim, using abbreviations to get them down. Record abbreviations, probes, and interviewer comment in parenthesis. Write as the responder talks.

During this study, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews to gather data. Yukl’s Managerial Practices Survey and Air Force Instruction 36-2618, Enlisted Force Structure, was used to develop an interview guide (Appendix F) to lead the research process. The guide was pilot-tested and refined based on the results.

Location

Before interviews, participants were sent an email package containing a cover letter (Appendix A), study information (Appendix B), participant demographical form (Appendix C), Kansas State University Informed Consent Form (Appendix D), and a copy of the Air Force Research Approval Letter (Appendix E). Participants read and signed the consent form before the interviews occurred. Interviews took place in quiet locations convenient for the participant. Each interview was scheduled for a one hour block of time. Interviews took about one hour each to complete. Some

interviews lasted longer, but effected participants elected to complete the interview rather than schedule another time to do so.

Audio recording

For this study, interviews were digitally recorded after obtaining permission from the participant. The researcher made recording of interviews a condition of participation due to the large amount of material which needed to be gathered.

There is some difference of opinion when it comes to recording interviews. Krathwohl (1998, pg.624) sites the following strengths and weakness for using an interview recording device:

Strengths

1. Stays on the job, avoids human fatigue and clerical errors, has infinite patience.
2. May capture content missed by written records, such as voice inflection and nonverbal communication.
3. Provides a sufficiently complete record that it can often be reprocessed from a new point of view as analytic techniques are devised or new insights are gained by further research.

Weaknesses

1. Equipment does not make judgments, so it produces an extensive record that must be processed.
2. Equipment failures can be a problem, especially when failures result in missing vital parts of the data.
3. Operator error, haste, or insufficient training result in improperly collected data.
4. Audiotape omits the visual, which could be important.

Analysis of Data

Researcher analysis (steps 1-5) during the actual study mirrored steps taken during the pilot study. The actual study included a few more analysis steps in order to further flush out the significant leadership behaviors. As a reminder they were:

1. (*Referential adequacy*) The researcher listened to the audio file. The text file was checked during the same time for transcription accuracy.
2. Researcher read text file again, making written notes as appropriate.
3. Researcher created a new text file and copied / pasted text file information into central leadership behavior themes.
4. Researcher read through the behavior file to ensure information extracted from the original text file was interpreted correctly and placed into the appropriate theme.
5. (*Member checks*) Researcher emailed audio, text, and behavior file to the study participants. They were asked to read through each file and verify transcription accuracy and researcher interpretation of the material.
6. Before the final significant CMSgt behaviors were identified, all data was sent to Kimberley Rolf, who conducted a secondary review of all data material.

In total, the researcher read through each participant's original transcription and common themes data several times before producing a final list of CMSgt significant leadership behaviors.

Protection of Human Rights

This study complied with all the requirements of the Kansas State University (KSU) Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects; the researcher completed the required university training. As previously mentioned, a cover letter explaining the research and an informed consent form was given to all participants before the interview phase of the study. The researcher verbally covered the

information and addressed concerns as well. Participants were sent all forms by e-mail before the interview.

Summary

This chapter outlined the research methodology used for this study. The pilot and actual study phases were described along with specific details provided for the basis of utilizing qualitative research, characteristics of qualitative research, researcher roles, qualitative indicators, analysis of data, sample selection, and the research process.

Chapter 4

Findings

Pilot Study Results

As mentioned in the last chapter, Byrne (2001c) and Krathwohl (1998) advise that individuals with little qualitative research experience should first pilot test their study. The pilot study for this research effort began with the researcher's initial telephone contact with active duty Chief Master Sergeants (CMSgt) currently working on Randolph Air Force Base (AFB), located in San Antonio, Texas. The criteria used for selection of volunteer participants included active duty CMSgts who have completed at least 24 years of military service, performed in at least two separate jobs as a CMSgt, and have completed at least an associates degree. One final criterion for the pilot study was that participants must have completed at least a bachelor's degree. The rationale for this final criterion was that participants would be better able to provide feedback on the interview guide, actual research participant selection, data collection, and other issues related to the study.

Participants

Four CMSgts participated in the pilot study, two male and two females. Some elected to use a pseudonym, while others were given neutral names such as Chief 1, Chief 2, etc. Pilot study participants consisted of the following:

Chief Cyndy

Chief Cyndy is employed as a Manpower and Organization Program Manager; Air Force Specialty Code is 3S300. She has been in the Air Force for 26 years and earned a Masters Degree in Business Administration. In her current position, Chief Cyndy oversees enlisted manpower and organization functions, and conducts inspections of subordinate departments at separate locations,

commonly called field units. She performs managerial oversight of this function for 13 Air Force bases.

Chief 2

Chief 2 is employed as an Enlisted Professional Military Education Program Manager; Air Force Specialty Code is 8T000. He has been in the Air Force for over 24 years and earned a Bachelors Degree of Arts in General Studies. In his current position, Chief 2 oversees the Enlisted Professional Military Education program. He performs managerial oversight of this function for 13 Air Force bases.

Chief SirIsh

Chief SirIsh is employed as a Paralegal Program Manager; Air Force Specialty Code is 5J000. She has been in the Air Force for 27 years and earned a Masters Degree of Arts in Management and Leadership. In her current position, Chief SirIsh oversees the enlisted paralegal program. She performs managerial oversight for 13 Air Force bases and a few other small locations that employ enlisted paralegals.

Chief Jack

Chief Jack is employed as a First Sergeant; Air Force Specialty Code is 8F000. He has been in the Air Force for 29 years and earned a Bachelors Degree of Science in Occupation Education. In his current position, Chief Jack advises the Squadron Commander on enlisted issues and conveys the Commander's policies to enlisted personnel. He performs managerial oversight of the First Sergeant function for 13 Air Force bases.

All pilot study interviews were conducted at the Randolph AFB library. This facility has private rooms and provided ample space to conduct the interviews and take notes as well. Before interviews, participants were sent an email package containing a cover letter (Appendix A), study

information (Appendix B), participant demographical form (Appendix C), Kansas State University Informed Consent Form (Appendix D), and a copy of the Air Force Research Approval Letter (Appendix E). Finally, participants were asked to provide copies of their Enlisted Performance Reports (EPR) they received at the CMSgt level. An EPR is the Air Force's official written documentation of an enlisted person's job performance, normally covering the period of a year. The EPR contains confidential information so the researcher extracted information from the document and did not include the actual EPR document as part of this research study.

The pilot study interviews took about one hour each to complete. Based on the pilot study and participant recommendations several changes were made to the Interview Guide:

1. Not to ask questions derived from Air Force Pamphlet 36-2241 Volumes I and II. Why? Because the information was a repeat of questions used in Dr. Gary Yukl's Managerial Practice Survey.
2. Changed the beginning of each question from "As a CMSgt, to what extent do..." to "As a CMSgt do you..." This was done to shorten the beginning portion of each question and reduce leading the participant to believe that performing the behavior in question was the only option available.
3. Each question was extended to end with, "and if so provide examples where you performed this behavior." This was added to solicit behavior examples and not just a "yes" or "no" response.
4. Some of the questions were long and participants had trouble providing a complete answer. As a result, a few of the questions were split into shorter questions.

5. For Question 3A, the word “work” was added just before “environmental change”. Some participants were confused about what type of environmental change the question was referring to.
6. Added questions asking participants where or how they learned the leadership behavior. The initial guide only asked if they performed the behavior, not where or how they learned it.
7. Added an emerging theme section at the end of the Interview Guide. This was done to capture behaviors not listed in the guide, but that participants mentioned enough to warrant asking subsequent participants for their thoughts about the behavior.
8. Added a final question to the Interview Guide asking participants if there were other behaviors, skills, schools, jobs, duty locations, etc that they feel would enhance their capability to perform as a CMSgt.

After the pilot study interviews each audio file was sent to GMR Transcription Services, a company based out of Irvine California, 949-654-7897. GMR was able to transcribe the audio interview data to text files in 3-4 weeks. The transcriptions were very accurate, which was critical to the researcher’s subsequent analysis of the text material. The researcher maintained the actual transcription and common theme documents for each pilot participant as part of the audit trail information for this study.

Research Study Findings

There were 10 CMSgts who participated in the actual study. What follows is information about their demographical characteristics, relevant employment experience, and findings regarding significant leadership behaviors.

Participants

Some participants elected to use a pseudonym, while others used neutral names such as Chief 1, 2, etc... They were as follows:

Chief 5

Chief 5 is employed as a Civil Engineering Training Pipeline Manager; Air Force Specialty Code is 3E000. He has been in the Air Force for over 27 years and earned a Bachelors Degree of Science in Occupational Education. In his current position, Chief 5 manages the Civil Engineering apprentice and advanced training program. He performs managerial oversight of this function for 13 Air Force bases and four technical schools.

Chief 6

Chief 6 is employed as a Civil Engineering Program Manager; Air Force Specialty Code is 3E000. He has been in the Air Force for 27 years and earned an Associates of Applied Science Degree in Ecological Controls. In his current position, Chief 6 oversees the enlisted Civil Engineering functions such as Firefighters, Electrician, Plumbers, and Explosive Ordinance employees. He performs managerial oversight of these functions for 13 Air Force bases.

Chief 7

Chief 7 is employed as a Recruiting Functional Program Manager; Air Force Specialty Code is 8R300. He has been in the Air Force for over 26 years and earned a Bachelors Degree of Science in Human Resource Development. In his current position, Chief 7 performs managerial oversight of the operational inspection of subordinate personnel recruitment offices.

Chief 8

Chief 8 is employed as a Chiefs Group Assignment and Utilization Program Manager; Air Force Specialty Code is 3S000. He has been in the Air Force for 31 years and earned an Associates of

Applied Science Degree in Police Science. In the position, Chief 8 performs managerial oversight of all routine, special and developmental assignment actions of CMSgts across the Air Force.

Chief 9

Chief 9 is employed as a Command CMSgt; Air Force Specialty Code is 9E000. He has been in the Air Force for over 25 years. In this special duty position, Chief 9 is the top enlisted advisor to a General officer.

Chief 10

Chief 10 is employed as a Superintendent, Air Force Personnel Center. He is one of about 30 CMSgts assigned to this organization with similar job titles but managing different departments. He has been in the Air Force for over 24 years and earned an Associates of Applied Science Degree. In this position, Chief 10 oversees the centralized Human Resources service function for the Air Force.

Chief 11

Chief 11 is currently employed as a Logistics Plan Career Field Functional Program Manager; Air Force Specialty Code is 2G000. She has been in the Air Force for over 26 years and earned a Masters Degree of Art in Public Administration. In her current position, Chief 11 performs managerial oversight of employees in this career field across 13 Air Force bases.

Chief 12

Chief 12 is currently employed as a Command CMSgt; Air Force Specialty Code is 9E000. He has been in the Air Force for over 28 years and earned an Associates of Applied Science Degree in Transportation Management. In this special duty position, Chief 12 is the top enlisted advisor to a General officer.

Chief Caleb Hawk

Chief Caleb Hawk is currently employed as a Combat Control Program Manager Program Manager; Air Force Specialty Code is 1C200. He has been in the Air Force for over 28 years and earned one Associates Degree of Applied Science in Airway Science and another in Kinesiology. In his current position, Chief Caleb Hawk performs managerial oversight of employees in this career field across several Air Force bases.

Chief 14

Chief 14 is currently employed as a Personnel Specialist Program Manager; Air Force Specialty Code is 3A0X1. He has been in the Air Force for over 24 years and earned a Bachelors of Science Degree in Computer Information Systems. In his current position, Chief 14 performs managerial oversight of employees in this career field across several Air Force bases.

Member Checking Information

Chief participants provided very little input to the transcription and behavior analysis documents that were emailed to them. As a result, each participant was called to solicit them for additional inputs. Main comments were correcting grammatical errors made in the behavior analysis document. None of these errors had any effect on the actual behavior findings within the research study. They all felt the researcher captured the essence of their experiences and were very excited to see the final draft of this dissertation. Members were given until 1 November 2008 to make any changes to the data. No further inputs were given to the researcher. The researcher maintained the actual transcription and common theme documents for each participant as part of the audit trail information for this study.

Secondary Reviewer Information

Ms Kimberley Rolf conducted a comprehensive review of all transcription data material. She made several observations (part of the audit trail) all of which supported the primary researcher's preliminary findings in this study. Her contact information is located in Appendix G.

CMSgt Significant Leadership Behaviors

Based on the pilot study and associated transcription data, actual participant transcription data, member checks, other audit trail information, and secondary reviewer input, the following active duty CMSgt significant leadership behaviors were found and are summarized during the following sections:

Technical area

Active duty CMSgts working on Randolph AFB, Texas do not actually perform technical behaviors. Technical behaviors are the job of lower ranking enlisted and some junior officer personnel. Some of these individuals work directly for the chiefs or are assigned to other Air Force bases for which they have functional oversight responsibility. It appears chiefs are heavily involved with more expansive technical issues. These broader issues are those which require not only a significant amount of technical competence, but also an expert knowledge of the specific job function in relation to other occupations (Air Force Specialties) with which they share common duties and responsibilities.

Assign tasks / communicate expectations

Chief 5 related the following experience of challenging subordinate personnel to remain technically competent:

Just Thursday, I went down to an organizational area where the unit-training manager was. I said to him I understand, my concern is there is no one here who knows where the letter is of all the people, the certifiers and trainers. Where is that letter the commander signed? And he was befuddled. He looked at me and says, yeah, there is one. I said, but there's not in

regulation, I read it. And he looked at me and I said, now it's been years since I've been a certifier and trainer, it's the way we used to do business. So I went to a senior master sergeant and then I went to a tech sergeant, and asked them the same thing. And both of them didn't know the answer, and they were the experts. So he said well, chief, I'll get back with you. So he gets back with me. He says in the email, he says, chief, they changed it about a year ago. We don't do that anymore and here is the reason why. I thought okay, that's not a problem, but the point is the folks who are supposed to know it didn't know. So I taught them something in the process of trying to learn something.

Chief 6 provides an example of chiefs being tasked with large projects:

For instance, during the last Operational Readiness Inspection there were things that needed to be done. The Colonel tasked me, hey, Chief, I need your help. I need you to get...we need to get through this thing. We haven't had one in seven years, so just take it and go with it. So, yeah, we got excellent on it, so yeah...I took charge...Get the inspection checklist, this is what's going to be inspected. We need to make it happen.

Chief 7 explained how he coordinates with other organizations to resolve technical and other

issues:

All the chiefs over there in the recruiting center, I've known them for years. We all grew up in this business together, every last one of us have anywhere from 18 plus years in recruiting. So I'll go over and if I see an issue of out in the field or something that effects there, they implemented a policy that really is counterproductive and I'll just go into their office. We'll sit down; we'll talk and I'll tell them what I'm seeing out there, why it's counterproductive and so forth. And you know, we have that informal way of just getting our point across and making sure that they understand.

Chief 8 indicates having to provide follow-up / more thorough answers to questions concerning

his technical area of expertise:

[In relation to chiefs speaking with him about a assignment decision] Particularly if it's not the answer they want to hear up front, so they want to come to the top and find out. You know, because that's tech and master sergeant level, and they've seen certain exceptions but sometimes I go out and say okay, that might have worked for this, but if you really want or she wants to get here, what can we do for them there? We're kind of like lawyers. Lawyers can tell you what can't be done. Or they can tell you what can be done. I can defend this and we try to be over here and find you an angle to work with what you're trying to do, whether you're the commander or the chief, versus us sitting there saying, nope, can't do that, nope, can't do that. We try to find a way to get to where you want to go.

Chief 9 describes the exact nature of a chief's technical expertise responsibilities:

I was a command chief for a while, went back to flight engineer, to command chief again, and then back to flight engineer, and so that's a unique career path. But as a flight engineer, even as a Chief Master Sergeant, I had to retain my technical competency in the aircraft in which I was a qualified crewmember. But then again as a Chief Master Sergeant, you manage those other engineers that fly the aircraft daily and your responsibility becomes more of one of administrator, supervisor and manager.

Chief 10 provides an example of the technical aspect of a chief's job:

The more senior you get, the less technical you become...they don't pay you for what you do but more for what you know, and there's a lot of truth to that because I remember when I was a young Airman, you know, I'm fire. I was doing all this stuff, but as you grow, more and more you have people that will take care of that stuff, and you do more of the leadership stuff. Well, you know, as a chief, let's say you work on aircraft. Chief's not expected to change a tire on an aircraft, but the chief is expected to know that a tire needs to be changed.

Chief 11 explains how she delegates the more technical aspects of her job:

Technically sitting where I'm sitting at there's not a lot of technical work that I do at that level. If they do, I do refer it to someone in the office that's working with that particular job. [Speaking about the calls she receives] Mostly career stuff. Where should I go – can I go to this base? What's the next step in my career field, you know, that type of stuff, commanding issues from commanders.

Chief 12 shares experiences of delegating purely technical issues, while maintaining decision-making authority in relation to “who” and “how” the technical duties will be accomplished:

I'm very much in an advisory role now. And there are times when it'll be appropriate, and I'll step in and say, “You need to do that.” But that was a great deal of my role when I first made Chief and traffic management, figuring out – I was a Chief. I was promoted to Chief and traffic management flight was about 48 people. Forty-eight enlisted people, big, another twenty military folks supporting a major aerial port. And that was the entire job. Which piece of cargo has to move first? Who's going to work in which section? Who's going to work late because we've got stuff to do?

In contrast, Chief Caleb Hawk is the only person on his staff with specific technical skills and as such cannot delegate many technical questions:

Yeah, I do that, and I'm a little hesitant on giving that right away because it being technical related to me that I need to get in and do some research, put data together, make sure it's accurate.

Chief 14 drives home the point that most chiefs deal with more broad as opposed to purely technical related issues:

The technical aspect of my job is really not up to me. I leave that up to the subject matter experts because they're the ones out there in the field. I'm concerned with the aspect of does this on the left-hand side of one, going to get up to a two on the right-hand side, and I need it to get there as short as possible. I need to look at the kill chain, and I need to shorten that kill chain because when we deliver information we need to make sure it's fast and it's presented in the right venue, in the right mode, that they need to see it and make decisions. So technical, not really.

Counselor area

Active duty CMSgts currently employed on Randolph AFB, Texas, regularly spend time walking and talking with employees at all organizational levels. During these informal contacts, whether local or at another installation, they conduct mentoring (individual and small group) sessions with lower ranking enlisted and junior officer members. Sometimes they even counsel employees about issues which can be resolved with minimal or no disruption at the worksite.

Some common issues that CMSgts discuss during face-to-face interactions with subordinate enlisted personnel include decisions about future military jobs, advanced technical schools, professional development opportunities, special duty assignments, deployments, education, and transitioning from noncommissioned to commissioned officer status. Although a Career Assistance Advisor and other personnel specialist are charged with providing military employees with career information, CMSgts, as visible evidence of a successful career, often provide career counseling to these people as well. Some of the mentoring that chiefs perform is conducted by sending emails to employees and during staff meetings. Finally, chiefs do a great deal of mentoring during visits to other Air Force installations for which they have functional authority over specified career fields and subordinate enlisted employees. The counseling related data resulted in the following significant leadership behaviors:

Influence

Chief 5 describe how he influences subordinates employees during various encounters:

So when I'm talking to my Airmen or my junior NCOs, staff sergeants, I'll say do you want to make more money? Do you want to buy a new car? Do you – what's important to you? And they'll tell you. They'll say yeah, I want to make more money. Oh, so you're really no different than the person on the street. You want a better life. Well, how do you get that better life? I'm going to work hard. I'm going to get my stripes. Sometimes when Airmen graduate and I'm invited, I will talk to them about their success individually. I may do that [provide motivating words] in a squadron commander's call, a picnic, or something of that nature.

Chief 6 echoes the idea that having a frank discussion with subordinate employees is the best way to have a positive influence:

I just prefer being honest. You call it as you see it. If there's a problem, I'm going to you directly. I hate going around having to go to the Colonel and then come back to you. If I see a problem, it's better to come right to you and say hey, look, I see this going on. You go in a club every day I know it's your call, but when it starts effecting your work there's a problem.

Chief 7 describes how he shares his expertise with others while visiting other Air Force Bases under his purview:

So I spend a lot of time with production superintendents when we're walking along on inspection. Mentoring them and just showing them various ways to evaluate their flight chiefs and some of the things they can do to help develop their flight chiefs. Anything that I see that maybe that production superintendent needs to do, I'll bring it to his attention.

Chief 8 offers a unique but effective influence technique:

We have probably 10 to 15 percent of the chiefs we deal with are dishonorable or malicious, sometimes criminal in their approach to try and get what they want. And so to keep that in check, keep it under control and still get our points across, we'll take anonymous stories that are true stories, but we'll package them on anonymity and when we go out and mark it from internal to the office, external to the office, with wing commanders that we're going to the wing commanders summit, we'll go through what we call our top five or six cases. The other thing which I try to do is package it with humor. I don't know what it is about humor, but nine out of ten people appreciate some and it gives them a good chuckle. You know, and they'll remember that more than anything else. So, again we try to – and there's a lot of humor any time you deal with people and families and us, and you know, mistakes.

Chief 9 offers his perspective on influencing others concerning military service:

For me, it's simple. It's all about service. I mean, every day we come to work and put on this nation's cloth and have this rare privilege to live a life of service. Most people go to work to earn a paycheck. Most people go to work to sell a product. Most people go to work for a myriad of reasons but today we serve. We come to work to serve this nation and if you look at the history and the legacy of that, and you realize that it's not the poet that gives us freedom speech, it's the warrior. That it's not the judge that gives us liberty and equal opportunity, it is the warrior, and that it is not the preacher that gives us freedom of religion, it is the warrior, and you capture that what we do, it's so unique. If you go to basic training today and watch eight and a half, six to eight and a half weeks later, these young civilians – the best that America has to offer and their sons and daughters become these Airmen. And then recognize that you have the responsibility to send them in harm's way and to prepare them for that, I mean, what could be more – what else could be more motivating? So, it's really telling the Air Force story. We make meaning. So, when things are confusing, when things are tough and difficult or hard, you just have to bring them into perspective. And often, you don't have to say I feel your pain, or I apologize for your pain, but you have to be aware of the pain and make them aware of why it is that we do what we do, and 90 percent of the time most people step up to that.

Chief 10 offers some pointed comments for a few of subordinates:

There are some folks that you look at them and you go, "You have one too many stripes on your sleeve," and I've told people that, Senior NCOs that. You've got one too many, and there were others that are performing way beyond the rank that they had, and then there's some performing as hard, but you don't know that by just looking at them, or a piece of paper tells you something, but it doesn't tell you the whole story or the kind of leader they really, really are until you start seeing them interact in different environments and take them out of their comfort zone.

Chief 11 shares her experience talking with subordinate employees:

I personally meet with them away from their supervisors and their leadership, and we just have an open, you know, talk, and that's what I do with them. [Referring to employees requesting to speak with her] Well, enlisted, a lot of times about their EPRs, you know, or school stuff, PCS moves. "Have you been to this base or do you know" – things like that, or even personal stuff. I have had a situation like that with a civilian [and officer butting heads]. Not very often, but when I have – [I] engage. I talked to them both; kind of let them meet in the middle.

Chief 12 argues for more personal involvement as the best means to influence others:

We live in an electronic, digital age, but we have to stay personal in it. I think that as the young man who got e-mail congratulated for all his – for his award, he noted – in fact, I used the quote when we went back to brief the General. He said, "You can't love me by e-mail. If you want to love me, it's got to be hands on." So it's a personal thing, I think, is where we do the best.

Chief 14 shares his approach for influencing subordinates:

I challenge them, and I challenge them in ways to really not just work long hours, not just make phone calls to the bases to make sure the programs are on track, whether Program X is on track or if Z's on track. I challenge them to do more for the bases. So I challenge them with that. I challenge them to be subject matter experts.

Supporter

Chief 5 articulates his position on utilizing supporting rather than coercive behaviors as means to motivate subordinate members:

I'm the chief. I don't have to slam my hand on the table. I don't have to yell at people. I don't have to do those things. I suggest, I inspire, I direct, I influence, but I don't usually have to do anything mean or nasty in any way. I'm teaching my younger folks not to do that as well, and I can teach them by speaking to them. I did that at the dinner table with my girls. This happened today, what do you think I should have done? And they can evaluate that, we are the sum total of our experiences, so sooner or later what I have went through, you're going to go through. How you deal with your wife, how you do your work, how you deal with your supervisor – we all have supervisory problems. We all have financial problems at some time. We all have children problems at some time, if we have children. We all have spouse problems, girlfriend problems, boyfriend problems, whatever the case might be, we all have them, but how do we deal with those? And what is the positive outcome of that? And I think everything that we do, it doesn't always happen that way, but I would like to see a successful outcome achieving whatever objective we're trying to do together, beneficially. You don't have to like me. You don't have to care about me, but I will do what I can for you no matter what.

Chief 6 follows with his approach to supporting individuals:

Like I say, they're watching you. Even you know, if someone comes to you with a problem and need help and all that, regardless of what you're doing, you need to set that aside because people should come first regardless. Put that aside and help them work through their problem.

Chief 11 echoes her fellow chiefs:

Listen to them. I compliment them, let them know where they're lacking, and I have an open door, open "come talk to me whenever you need to."

Chief Caleb Hawk offers words of support to his technical school instructor subordinate employees:

You know, sometimes I think the guys forget how important what they're doing because they get it and they grind. So something I'll use at this level, something here, is just being familiar with the instructors. These are America's sons, and you're providing them the training that's going to keep him alive on the battlefield, and you're getting a break from the action, and you're going to school, and the Air Force is paying for that? Come on. You know, how could you not be happy? So, you know, it's kind of – have to remind them every now and then of really – the value of what they are, how important they are, so – and that's fairly recent here in this command.

Chief 14 performs what he calls “top cover” support for his subordinates:

[...] so then at that point, I give them the program, I give them the autonomy and the authority to do what they need do to have a successful program, and I provide the top cover to make sure no one's giving them any flack that they shouldn't be getting.

Facilitator

Chief 5 describes how he acts as a conduit or facilitator of information above and beneath his organizational level:

[...] if there's other things that people need to do their work, but I think other people outside my organization who are related to the work may need to know the information...I pass it on to them as well. We're talking about the MAJCOM, Air Staff. I will reach across all the borders and boundaries to make sure they have the information because in whatever I'm doing, if somebody has another piece, frequently they'll send it to me or let me know what's going on. If I give some information to Air Staff, AETC or school house, I frequently – probably I would say almost 100 percent of the time I will reach across a swath of people, experts and say to the person in the To line, here is the information you need but I'm hitting all the experts at the same time. It's called cross talk.

Chief 6 articulates how he approaches subordinates to help resolve their issues:

Usually at off-site or in the morning, I try to walk down and see the guys in the morning time. [If] somebody is trying to work something, they got a problem then I try to help them out.

Chief 7 shares his attitude about facilitating subordinate input during his decision-making process:

A lot of it's going to depend on the situation. If the situation dictates a quick decision must be made, I'll go ahead and make the decision and let them know how we're going to play it. If the situation dictates I really have more time to get their input then I'll include them on the decision making process. Let them know what's going on, get their input from it and

normally, if they come up with something that's going to be suitable for that, I'll – that's okay with me and we'll run with it.

Chief 7 also facilitates skill development of subordinate members:

Every time we come back from an inspection, we'll sit down and do a little what we call a round table, and we just talk about what we seen out there. What was their impressions of it, basically, what I'm trying to do with all my guys – our position is probably what they do is probably the best position in all of Air Force recruiting service to help prepare them for their next step in recruiting, production superintendent. And since I've already done that, basically, what we do is we sit around and I try to have them put on that superintendent's hat and say okay, from this squadron here, these are our pictures that we have. As a production superintendent, how would you address this? How would you task this and so forth? And I'll let them discuss it and so forth, and if they're way off base, you know, I'll try to steer them just by asking certain types of questions. Just try to get them back in the right line of thinking and so forth, so that's pretty much what we do. Try to prepare them to become the superintendent, make sure that when they get out there, they're a successful superintendent and they don't go through that normal process of trying to figure things out where it takes them, you know – that first year is going to be your most difficult for them.

Chief 8 facilitates a more structured approach to skill development:

From the time you pick a base, all of our coordination with you, owning [current] senior rater, gaining senior rater, the Career Field Manager, [and] what policy had to say. All of that is stapled together in a big package and we keep that, and if we go through those, they're all gray area. There's no black and white. So, we learn and grow as we do each one of the moves and try to share those lessons across all the assignment NCOs because each one deals with a particular track. It's a scheduled thing we try to do.

Chief 9 articulates his general attitude concerning facilitating his commander's vision and other expectations:

Well, any senior level manager disseminates information about the corporation division and communicates where the organization is going, what the expectations are of the workers and tries to team build, and that's what we do from this office. I have the obligation, responsibility to communicate my commander's vision to the Airmen that serve under his charge.

Chief 12 shares Chief 9's same experience:

And it's – I think you have to be involved in that process because a good part of what I do is selling that vision. A big part of being a Command Chief is Marketing 101, taking ideas and making sure everybody understands them. When you're standing up in that enlisted call, it's – you're not there just because you're the Command Chief. And even though you're going to open up the floor to the questions later, you're not there just to answer questions or to find

out who is having a problem that you can fix. The main focus you're doing is helping communicate what it is we're trying to do and why it is we're trying to do it. Because our folks will not do anything they don't understand the reason for. We don't get anywhere on, well, everybody's just going to shut up and do this. Americans don't – Americans aren't blind followers.

Chief Caleb Hawk shows how he facilitates the occupational skill advancement of subordinate employees:

But still talking with the instructors, and talking about their careers, and what they're going to – some of them have some complicated situations like, you know – most complicated piece of equipment in the Air Force is the individual. You know that. So talking with them, the instructors, I would say, here, would be where I give that career counseling. So I've had a couple of those guys – I think I've kind of helped them when they've gone astray or something and said hey, you know, this is where you really need to look at this, and, you know, just back off the emotions and work the issue.

Chief 14 shares similar facilitation experiences to his fellow chiefs:

Yes, I like talking to the ROTC cadets and doing the panel for the FTAC council, and I think that I really enjoy that.

Problem Solver

Active duty CMSgts currently employed on Randolph AFB, Texas, spend the majority of their time solving a myriad of problems. One common thread among all the participants is the following: Chiefs are the individuals who “make it happen” or facilitate finding the right solution to the problem. Why exactly is this? The simple answer is because of the many stripes worn on their shirt sleeve, because of the number of years it takes to achieve this rank, and because they have obtained the highest enlisted rank in Air Force. Personnel occupational restructuring, assignment relocation, and broad technical issues are just some of the problems that chiefs are tasked with to find solutions.

Chief 5 describes how he acquired his problems solving skills:

AFCESA is where I gained a lot of those skills and abilities. I don't think I would be as successful today...I've expanded my skill base, my toolbox, I am far ahead of some of my peers in that area because of AFCESA. Because they were patient, they stopped at work. They were able to express and explain to me what needed to be done. They literally rewrote my program and projects and constantly gave my input.

Chief 6 indicates a more free-wheeled problem solving approach to resolve his manning issues:

You know, the only way is manning, dealing with manning all the time, and with A76 going on, there's a lot of problems going on. Basically, I have to shuffle people around or do command leveling so one unit won't be left out and not be able to meet the mission.

Chief 7 oversees a staff of more senior enlisted members and uses them extensively to ferret out problems:

I'm just there to sit down, maybe do a round table if we see a problem or something like that there.

Additionally, Chief 7 prefers to weigh in on problems after his more senior subordinates have attempted to resolve them:

Let's say the production superintendent disagrees with one of the inspectors or whoever, and you know, they'll normally discuss it and if they can't come to any conclusion, they'll normally bring me in. And you know, a lot of times I'll try to show the superintendent where it is that inspector is coming from.

Chief 8 describes a more structured problem solving approach:

Virtually every assignment action we do starts off as a problem. You know, it's really – it's kind of an algebraic kind of thing. You know, if X, then Y, and try to get over here to Z. And so the skill that we try to acquire is to figure out okay, take 9/10 of your wedge, 9/10 of his wedge, 9/10 of her wedge and figure out what's the common ground, and try and execute that. You know, so everybody kind of walks away with a large chunk of what they're looking for. No big loser, no big winner because anytime you do that, then you know, you have a problem out of balance.

Chief 9 offers his problem solving perspective by differentiating between CMSgts assigned to strategic and tactical positions:

I think chiefs fall into a couple categories under problem solving. So, personally, I believe you need to gather data from the experts. When you become a strategic level chief master sergeant, I don't think you're really an expert in every area. A good chief or any good leader will learn who the experts are and whose counsel they can trust and then gather that information and make a decision. My task is to gather the information from the experts and help that with the decision making process. Sometimes, there will be competing priorities or even different opinions. Then, it becomes a responsibility of that leader to just go ahead and make a decision and stand behind it. And so other chief master sergeants, and I see this more at the tactical level, they would be more structured in their process and more definitive

based on their own experience. You know, hey, I've been doing this for 23 years. This is the way we do it. This is the way I expect you to do it. Of course, the Air Force is born out of innovation and change and more so today than any other time, we are changing exponentially.

Chief 10 has been employed in higher headquarter positions for most of his career and shares his problem solving approach:

That's inherent to the job. I mean, as a chief, you're a problem solver. People come to you whether they're a general officer, a colonel, lieutenant. The chief is always viewed as the wise individual that gets things happening and solves problems. The trick is to recognize, okay, is it my problem? I mean, is it my problem to solve, or is it something that an individual at a lower level can solve with some leadership, and that's the trick. They go, "Hey, Chief. We need to talk to you about this," or, "Hey, Chief. Okay. Let's talk." And it's either, okay. Let me take this on, or who do I need to speak with, or, hey, how about this? What about this, and try to guide them to come up with solutions to the problem because – and I say this because my mom used to say this, "Hey, I'm not going to be here for your entire life, which means that you got to learn how to problem solve." [When asked about involving his supervisor] I don't get them involved. I just say, "Hey, Major, situation. This is pretty much what it was. Took care of it. This is what I did." Okay. And I'll get the okay. Very rarely are they drawn into a problem. If they're engaged, it's because it's a very serious problem, you know I mean really, really serious, borderline crime or something. Something that happened off base that had some law enforcement things – you know what I mean? It's out of the building, out of our control. In other words, I can't contain it in house. So if it's going to get outside my walls, obviously he's going to be drawn in.

Chief 11 describes her problem solving approach:

It all depends on what the problem is. If I can fix it or give the answer that they need, I'll do that. If I can't, I'll point them to someone who can.

Chief 12 believes that chiefs must be able to resolve problems through diplomatic means:

A lot of times when you get conflict out of hand at an Air Force organization at the senior levels, it's because both parties have allowed their ego to become more important than the mission. And I will – I will purposely – as if the other person starts to ramp up, I will ramp back. If they speak louder, I'll speak softer. I'm not going to give up the point. I may have to go back and come around to it later.

Chief 12 went on to use the following example:

Sir, I understand what you're trying to solve and, you know, I see what you've done – you know, where you're going with it, but I think that what you don't – you may not understand that this piece, I think, will cause something to happen different than what you want." Or, "I think there is a way to get there faster. Have you considered this?" The big part is not –

even if you believe they're wrong, you're not telling them they're wrong, figuring out how to tell them – how you could be more right than you are.

Chief Caleb Hawk describes his problem solving approach:

I think the first step is research, and then it's just a matter of letting the research tell you where to go, and then if you put the Airmen first, and that – that being your guiding principle – put the Airmen first, the right answer's going to come out, and then it's a matter of advocating for that and adjusting as you go down the road.

Chief 14 offers the following problem solving methodology:

I think they've already done the scrub, so you have to go through some logical deductions, and of course you have to stay focused. It helps to sometimes pull it out of the people. What's the real issue? Now, as far as within the job itself, the functions of the program, the programmatic of general staff, yeah, that's a little different, but you still got to figure out what's the cause and effect. You can see the effect in most cases; figuring out the cause is sometimes hard to grasp. I mean, you can sit down and just start asking – just start doing some mind mapping. But for the most part, if you know your policies and things like that, you kind of have to look at it--is it a communication barrier, is it organizational barrier, or is it personality issue? So there are a lot of different avenues you can look at.

Manager area

Active duty CMSgts currently employed on Randolph Air Force Base, Texas, spend a lot of time performing several management functions. In this area, it was difficult to determine those chiefs who performed the actual function from others who ensured that their senior subordinates accomplished it. One thing appears certain: whether taking a “hands-on” or a more “hands-off” approach, the chiefs in this study maintained responsibility to ensure the accomplishment of the management function.

Decision maker

Chief 5 describes his formula for deciding if and when he makes a decision:

Not always, depends, not always. It depends on the importance of it. If it's going to impact their livelihood, their family, their funding or the money or their job division, they're going to move somewhere, yeah, and maybe coordinating or consulting with them – it's more informing them. Because you know as well as I do in the military, once something is done, unless a supervisor changes their mind, you're going anyway. If somebody comes up and says, hey Chief, this is a good idea. I think we should, I go, okay. How much does it cost?

There is no funding. Good idea, no funding. Bottom line is and all of us take the path of least resistance for the most part. I'm doing all this and this takes me a lot longer and this really isn't important and this is your idea – we may not be getting to your idea today. But if it's easy to do and I can do it now, I can get it over with and move it on, I will. So yes, I listen to people's ideas. Yes, I try to put them into practice. Sometimes, I know something won't work. I know it, but I allow it to happen anyway. Why? Because of the growth process, we'll talk about it and they'll say well, I want to do this or that. I think this is a good idea. I will ask, why is it a good idea? Why do you want to do that? And they'll tell me, and I'll say well, what is the outcome you want? I already know. I've already done it before. I allow them to do what they need to do because it builds trust in me. It builds expectations in themselves to accomplish something. I'm going to go ahead and do a life cycle for you. I have an Airman who is brand new here; if he or she doesn't know how to do their job, I'm going to tell them what to do. I have a bunch of Airmen who are very energetic in what they do. They are very good at what they do. They are not the experts, but they're good. So I give them some guide and sort of let them go, and I check on them occasionally. I have some senior NCOs who are not only good at what they do, they are always out in front of me. I just tell them what I want and walk away. I check on them and say have we done this at this time? So it depends on the experience, the abilities and the trust they have earned from me because I can respect them.

Chief 6 seems to use a similar participative approach when feasible:

Recently we made a lot of changes, we are moving people from MAJCOM to other divisions, other locations, and people have to take on more responsibility. So, you facility managers and unit deployment managers, I can't just say hey, you got to...I prefer to go to them and say this is something that's coming up. I think you'll be good at it and I think this, you should go ahead and take it. I will call the chief or the senior person at that base, and say look, you're base A, got base X that really is hurting for a position, and you're at 100 percent but just losing one person would bring you down to 90 percent. But this base is at say 50, 60 percent and usually they understand that and don't have a problem with it.

Chief 7 uses a duplicate approach to decision making:

A lot of it is going to depend on the situation. If the situation dictates a quick decision must be made, I'll go ahead and make the decision and let them know how we're going to play it. If the situation dictates I really have more time to get their input then I'll include them in the decision making process. Let them know what's going on, get their input from it and normally, if they come up with something that's going to be suitable for that, I'll – that's okay with me and we'll run with it.

Chief 8 argues that using a participative decision making approach is a great way to develop subordinates and obtain buy-in from other interested parties:

No chief action takes place without the views of others and the interested parties who tend to be the Career Field Manager (CFM) and the senior rater that owns the chief currently, to

know what's that chief's potential to go on and do, and then the senior rater [commander] always has a vested interest because he or she wants to make sure they are getting a capable, qualified chief for that duty. So you've got three interested parties besides the chief and the family, the CFM, current senior rater, and gaining senior rater.

Chief 9 subscribes to this same approach:

A good chief or any good leader will learn who the experts are and whose counsel they can trust and then gather that information and make a decision. In instances where change may be large and it needs to be socialized, absolutely. In those cases where expediency and necessity drives change, no, it just happens. It's situational. Often for me, it is the wing command chiefs and because the wing command chiefs daily are out there in the trenches executing the mission and they have the finger on the pulse of the work force-- so we dialogue often to try to decide what the best course of action is. And then I myself meet with the other major air command chiefs, who in total represent about 340,000 Airmen. And sit with the Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force, and we make recommendations to our commanders on the way ahead for at least enlisted development and morale and discipline issues, and even today, how to posture and present Airmen for the fight. Well, with my command chief, we often – we can do Video Teleconference, which can occur every couple of weeks. Twice a year, every six months, we meet as a group in a commanders and command chief's conference, and then we dialogue on the phone very often. With the other MAJCOM command chiefs who are like me but representing other commands, we meet every senior NCO academy graduation, so about every eight weeks.

Chief 10 shares similar comments to other study participants about his decision making

approach:

I mean, there are some things that – it all depends on the situation, obviously, and the need to bring in others. I mean, there's going to be some situations where there's no time to bring in other people, and you go with gut and your experience, and you go with what Colin Powell, you know, great man and individual that I had an opportunity to not know personally but to be around when I was at the Pentagon. He would say [summarized]: You get 75 percent of the facts. The rest of it, the other 25, is your gut, and you don't need all the facts to make the call because if you wait for 100 percent, it will never happen or it will be too late. What I'm going to do, a lot of the things that I do is say, "Hey, look. This is the goal we've got to get to, folks. This is it. This is the goal. This is the end game right here. This is where we are. Get me there. Figure it out. Kick the tires on it. Vet it. Call whoever you want in the meeting. When you've got something to present me, call me." We'll get into a room. We'll get into this room and go, "Okay, Chief. This is what we come up with," and then I play devil's advocate on the idea, you know. Just drill it to death and try to shoot holes in it, and a lot of it is to see, you know, obviously they need to do their homework. I'm going to ask questions from my level, from the outside looking in, and somebody's researching it. They're very close to it for the last month or so, and they don't see anything in the peripheral. And they come to me, "Chief, this can work or this is what it's going to cost to do it." "Okay. Get an alternative," and so they have buy-in in everything that we execute.

Chief 11 also subscribes to a more “selling” problem solving approach:

Yeah. I mean, I do make the decisions, but I do call the person and make them think they have a part of it, but the decision has been made by me sometimes.

Chief 12 believes in a more participative decision making approach if possible:

I do when it’s possible. I didn’t early. You learn – you learn as you go along. I didn’t early because in – there is a military mindset that says everybody needs to do what they’re told to do. It’s not – it’s not effective to tell people all the time. We have a force that’s disciplined enough that when we make one of those decisions everybody’s going to go. But if we have the opportunity to consult people on change, you get two things out of it. One, they feel like somebody cared enough to let them know what’s happening. And number two, you can’t be smarter on your own than any group of people. Somebody out there is going to spot something that you missed, some angle to some opportunity or some pitfall. And if you consult them, there is a chance they’ll say, hey, that’d be great, but it’d be better if you did this or – you know, gee, boss, that’s not a light at the end of a tunnel, that’s a train.

Chief Caleb Hawk echoes a situational approach as well:

So, yeah, I think I take that into consideration, but lots of times, due to the fact that I’m trying to influence the chain above me, or higher ranking officers, than I have less opportunity to go to those younger subject matter experts. So a lot of times it’s just me. So I would say it’s probably 50-50. If I have time, I like to go down and ask, but a lot of times you just don’t have time to just make it.

Chief 14, much like his peers, describes a situational approach:

It depends on the member, if they’re ready [but] not trained or trained and not ready or if they’re both then give it to them and just let them go with it. I’ve had good luck with supervising people. I said this is the program I want you to learn and if you got any issues or questions let me know, but it’s yours, it’s your baby. Then I may have another person where they may not be ready because they don’t feel that they’re up to it or maybe they’re not motivated for whatever reason.

Advisor

Chief 5 relates one of several examples during which he was solicited by his commander for candid feedback concerning the organization:

I told her, I said, this person said...were you aware of these? But she did say I was aware of...because it was thrown in her face, and it was because they were angry. And so as we talked about that, I had to ask her why did that happen? And so as we talked about it, one of the things I told her was you’re not aggressive enough...

Chief 6 states that his boss seeks his advice on a number of issues:

Yeah, right now, with all the changes, you know, with the new current, the way they're redesigning MAJCOMs now, and I have a big, you know, the Colonel usually runs everything by me and say hey, what do you think it is? Yeah, usually, sends me emails or just hey, I just got this from...Air Force from the general. This is what he suggested and what do you think? And I sit down and look at it. Then, set up a meeting and talk to him. This will work great this way but maybe it'll work a little better being in the field with most of the troops. I'd say weekly, yeah, weekly--whenever something comes up, he usually -- because we had a long discussion when he first got there and so I think we straightened it out. So, now pretty much, he kind of runs stuff by me before he sends it back out.

Chief 7 offers advice to his peers and senior ranking persons that operate both inside and outside of his organization:

All the chiefs over there in the recruiting center, I've known them for years. We all grew up in this business together, every last one of us have anywhere from 18 plus years in the recruiting. So I'll go over and if I see an issue of out in the field or something that effects there, they implemented a policy that really is counterproductive and I'll just go into their office. We'll sit down, we'll talk and I'll tell them what I'm seeing out there, why it's counterproductive and so forth. And you know, we have that informal way of just getting our point across and making sure that they understand. From what I see out there by inspecting the various squadrons, I go in and I sit down with the various [individuals] over at headquarters recruiting service. And let them know what I feel some of the directions that the command needs to go--and what as I always said, the storm cloud's on the horizon, and just recently we had one where I did a series -- we and the team picked up that there is a negative trend that is going on in the overall training of our flight chiefs out there and you know, something I started voicing about five, six months ago, and now I think headquarters recruiting service has to -- They are taking the steps necessary to make changes so that our flight chiefs will continue to be successful.

Chief 8 provides an example of how some chiefs advise some of the most senior Air Force leaders:

[...] Air Force appointed an IPT, and early '03, early '04, they sat down and said, what's the best way to manage the career once you become a chief? And how should we do assignments? And how should we do development? The IPT met, they come up with 12 key tenants on how to manage a chief. They floated that to the Chief of Staff of the Air Force through the CMSAF. Here's your 12 key things that you will do to manage the chiefs. So, that becomes our contract, our game plan.

Chief 9 offers an example of providing advice to a commander during a more sensitive issue:

[Referring to his support of a decoration for a subordinate member] And often there are cases where I would say no, but I wouldn't send it in to my commander [the chief works for a commander senior to the one who wrote the decoration] like that, I would hand carry it back to the group commander and say sir, I can't support this. Here are some things you might do to strengthen it. If you'd like me to send it in like this, I'll be happy to send it in just the way it is...Letting that group commander know that I non-concurred. So, a commander called me, group commander called me and said, Chief, I just feel – I understand you non-concur, but I feel so strongly about this medal. I said this is the wrong thing to do. This Airman deserves it. So, is that conflict? We disagreed. I said my recommendation to you is to make an appointment with the commander [the chief's boss] and let him know that you think this is the right thing to do because I have not cornered the market on expertise on medals.

There are times when I have made – adamant recommendations to the commander and stood on his boots until I knocked the polish off, and said this is an ugly baby. And when he said kiss the baby, I'd go out the door and it's my baby.

Chief 9 provides another example of providing advice to top Air Force leaders:

And then I myself meet with the other MAJCOM chiefs, who in total represent about 340,000 Airmen. And sit with the Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force, and we make recommendations to our commanders on the way ahead for at least enlisted development and morale and discipline issues, and even today, how to posture and present Airmen for the fight.

Chief 9 offers more insight to how chiefs are aligned within the Air Force as advisors to commanders at all levels:

You know, we like to say today that chiefs operate really at three levels: the operational, the tactical and the strategic level. So at my level, you know, it is much more strategic, and strategic in two ways. Strategic in making recommendations to my commander and how we should execute the mission and their education and training command, and effectively use our force, and strategic in that when the Chief of Staff of the Air Force and Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force and my own commander communicate a vision or direction that we need to head, that we socialize that and look for road blocks or obstacles to executing that.

Chief 11 describes her avenues for providing advice to senior officers:

Like our UT&W, Utilization and Training Workshop, our planning, what the technical schools are going to look like, what the Career Development Courses are going to look like in the future; all career field functionals at the MAJCOM [meet] every three years. Every year we have a functional manager work group among the chiefs, so it's kind of similar to

UT&W. We talk about the same thing, career stuff. So once a year we do that. Well, actually we're doing something like that now in the career fields, the evolution of the Logistics Readiness Squadron (LRS), and just last week myself and a few other chiefs, and not necessarily all chiefs, met, and we sat down in making the decision on how the LRS is going to look for next year.

Chief 12 describes his experience advising senior officers:

I'll give you an example. As a General's advisor on things that effect enlisted people, I am about the next-to-the-last person that sees a proposal or a document of staff package before he sees it. But it's already been through a number of people, almost always who believe that it's the right thing to do. On occasion – not a lot of them, but on occasion I look at it and based on my experience and my enlisted background and what I know, I believe that part or all of it is headed in the wrong direction and it needs to be different. Yeah. My goal being that we not waste any of the General's time. I'm often in the position of having to go back to very senior people who are very accomplished at what they do and believe in it strongly and go, "Sir, Ma'am, I can't support this the way it is. I have a problem with this part of it or that part of it or" – sometimes, "I understand why you did what you did, but I think the person who advised you is only giving you part of the story." I often have to resolve conflicts between myself and somebody else. And it's not – I'm not in a directive position. And it's a good thing, too, because sometimes I'm wrong. And we are able to sit there and work through that and see that.

[Speaking of how much does he tells his boss?] Only things that need his action. To be a commander at his level requires an intense amount of time and very efficient – very effectively focused time. He's got to take in a great deal of information, make decisions really quickly. I will share with him – if it absolutely has to have his action, I don't have the authority or whatnot to make it happen, but I think that it needs to and I want to advise him to do that. If I think it's a significant trend – and I will monitor trends and say, "Okay, Sir, as you get ready to travel" – because we often travel separately.

Chief Caleb Hawk is solicited for his expert advice as well:

I've just been real fortunate to work for some good guys, and he's one of them, and he has asked me a few times at situations and had recently commented that hey, I like it when you bring your input in too because it's unemotional and do it within one or two minutes and we're done– so he's called me in on several different occasions.

Chief 14 is asked for his advice:

[...] after having engaged with her a couple of times, I felt like I felt very comfortable being able to approach you, and she said, good, make sure the word gets out.

Mentor

Chief 5 spends a great deal of time mentoring subordinate enlisted members in a variety of ways:

[Speaking of reviewing Enlisted Performance Reports (EPR), provide feedback to the author before sending to commander] Indirectly I make recommendations to the individuals.

[In terms of allowing others to problem solve] Because of the growth process, we'll talk about it and they'll say well, I want to do this or that. I think this is a good idea. I will ask, why is it a good idea? Why do you want to do that? And they'll tell me, and I'll say well, what is the outcome you want? I already know. I've already done it before. I allow them to do what they need to do because it builds trust in me. It builds expectations in themselves to accomplish something.

[In relation to project management mentoring] And I will tell them, if it were me, I would do the following; put a big chart on the wall. On that chart, I would list all your projects. On the right hand side, I would put timelines. On the left hand side, I would put percentages, where you're at today. So if you have a project that's due on this date, everybody can see it. Because so many things are not seen where you can just look at them, they are frequently overlooked, and I have three or four managers that work for me that their projects are never done.

[Talking about mentoring a subordinate] I had a master sergeant work for me. He was a ...guy on heavy equip. He worked for me. We put him in vehicle operations; he said I hate my job. I don't want to be here...came in my office and complained every day, and I listened to him every day. And every day I would say to him, Bob, believe me one day all this information will come together and it's going to help you in the long run. But you can be successful, I will work with you. Your EPR is going to be firewall (highest rating level) if you do the following things: don't complain in front of the supervisors, I'm telling you, don't complain to anybody. If you have to complain to somebody, complain to me. Close your door, complain to me. I don't want you complaining outside the door. I don't want you complaining to the commander. I don't want you to do that. If you have a problem, you know, I want you to complain to me first. All these problems, all these things wrong, so we worked together, worked those issues out. Until what happened was, we put him for an award and he won. He worked for me for two years and he is doing outstanding things. The impact level he's having at the organization, Air Force, MAJCOM level. So now two years later, he says, you told me you would get me back in my career field, back to my job and I worked hard to get him back. And of course, the Lord provided, it worked out well. He got his old job back. Year goes by, and I get an email. I've already transferred to another duty location. Thanks Chief, I really appreciate it. Let me share with you what happened. You were absolutely right. I mean, I still have his email. You were absolutely right. I have become successful. It helped me more than I can begin to tell you doing my job because it has paid dividends in Unit Compliance Inspections (UCI), Operational Readiness Inspection (ORI) and all these other areas, I've become this person that I said I would never become.

[Regarding general philosophy] So when you deal with someone, you always, no matter what's out here, I always consider what's going on, what's happening. What are they thinking about? I need to be honest with them, when I know this person, how can I encourage this individual? What I know of this person, what do I need to do? How do I show them a real sincere concern or a real ability to do something and promote that without sounding shaky and inspiring them? That's all I can do because if you're the type of person who never says anything to anyone and one day, you come in, you go oh, good job. That could be an awesome thing. If that is the type of person you are and everyone can learn that. But if you build a relationship with someone, it has been my experience that when I say to you good job or when I tell you I'm really impressed, I don't just stop. I say, you did a good job. I like how you did that. This is what you did. This is what I felt the outcome was. This really meant a lot. It meant a lot to me. It meant a lot to this person. Now, I'm giving feedback on all different things that they did, not just good job.

Chief 6 facilitates a number of mentorship opportunities as well:

[Speaking about Reviews Enlisted Performance Reports, and providing feedback to the author before sending it to the commander] Yeah, I evaluate, take a look at every Enlisted Performance Report before it goes through and right now, I'm even looking at Officer Performance Reports (OPRs)...as a Chief they think you got all that experience. They are pretty sure you took a look at these once before and they just want you to use your knowledge that you've gained through the chain.

Yeah, I see where they're at and say maybe you need to be looking at going to school or whatever. Maybe this class is right for you. You know, you got – you're not doing anything. Don't do like I did and wait until the end. You need to start thinking ahead or to gain rank. What forms do you do that? Is it kind of a one-on-one? Is it done off-site? Usually at off-site or in the morning, I try to walk down and see the guys in the morning time. Somebody is trying to work something, they got a problem then I try to help them out.

Yes, right now monthly, all flight with the senior NCOs go and try to find out what we can do different, what we're doing wrong, how can we improve things at MAJCOM or... It could be anywhere. It could be at the club. It could be at the library, at the bowling alley, whatever, just to get it out of the work surroundings. Do you find that helpful? Yeah, I find people open up more when they get away from the cubicle world.

[Talking of mentoring opportunities during the graduation ceremony] I went through where I went to technical school and the guy there, the head guy, asked me if I would graduate these guys because you're the chief, blah, blah, blah. So, you know, I got up there with my speech, proud of what they're doing. We look for a lot more from you guys. One day maybe you guys will be a chief sitting here doing this.

[Regarding mentoring a commander at a subordinate unit] I'm out in the field, tell the commander, hey, because some of those don't have a chief at the bases so hey, if you got a problem with her, please call me and let me try to work it out, you know, whatever. I had a

commander call me the other day. He had a personnel problem and said hey, chief, I need your advice. How do I handle this?

Chief 7 agrees the other chiefs and provides his own mentorship examples:

[In terms of reviewing Enlisted Performance Reports, and providing feedback to the author prior to delivery to the commander] I get a lot of people out in the field, production superintendents and flight chiefs, they'll send me their EPRs for ideas. What could they possibly do to make themselves a lot more promotable, or couple of production superintendents actually sent me EPRs on some of their people to look over before they send them to the group (next organization level) and start pushing for stratification and things of that nature there.

So I spend a lot of time with production superintendents when we're walking along on inspection. Mentoring them and just showing them various ways to evaluate their flight chiefs and some of the things they can do to help develop their flight chiefs. Anything that I see that maybe that pro sup needs to do, I'll bring it to his attention.

Every time we come back from an inspection, we'll sit down and do a little what we call a round table, and we just talk about what we seen out there. What were their impressions of it, basically, what I'm trying to do with all my guys – our position is probably what they do is probably the best position in all of Air Force recruiting service to help prepare them for their next step in recruiting, production superintendent. And since I've already done that, basically, what we do is we sit around and I try to have them put on that superintendent's hat and say okay, from this squadron here, these are our pictures that we have. As a production superintendent, how would you address this? How would you task this and so forth?

Chief 8 describes a group mentoring session, very similar to that described by Chief 7, during which he develops his subordinates:

To grow and mature, yeah. We've got an audit trail of – your entire assignment actions stem to stern, you know. From the time you pick a base, all of our coordination, owning senior rater, gaining senior rater, the Career Field Manager, what policy had to say. All of that is stapled together in a big package and we keep that. There's no black and white. There's nothing that says, you know, Chief X or Chief Y or Chief Z is going to get this. X, Y and Z are competing and run them all through the process. Then, at the end, hopefully only one comes out the other end, you know, and then you can tell the other two why it was not them. So, as you walk through this, we call it making sausage. It will get kind of ugly and it's not real clean, but at the end, you want to be able to look at yourself and say you got it right. Well, sometimes we get to the end, and we're like, we're really not happy with how that turned out. Everybody was happy on their end but we feel like when we were let down on the policy side. We let down the Air Force. We spent too much money. We moved a person that only had a year on station. We could have moved one with three, save \$20,000.00. You know, etcetera, so each one of those as we walked through it, we try to learn, capture those lessons and get that in the next time. Sometimes we think we put all the

relevant data on the table up front, but sometimes we find that we don't. So, we learn and grow as we do each one of the moves and try to share those lessons across all the assignment NCOs because each one deals with a particular track. Oh yeah, once a week. It's a scheduled thing we try to do.

Chief 9 mentors members across several organizational levels:

Well, it is my responsibility and task to nurture and grow the leadership potential, not only in enlisted Airmen, but also in our officers. In fact, here in our education training command, we do a very thorough squadron commanders officers course. And I actually have an entire instruction block in that, and we rate those because my commander is all about in process improvement. And that particular block gets rated very highly and we evaluate that every time, and it's the time that I as a seasoned and experienced chief master sergeant talk to commanders, talk to potential commanders, lieutenant colonels about command and how to command.

Chief 10 provides some words of encouragement to his subordinates:

I mean, obviously there's been some very crappy experiences and very difficult things that I've gone through that I wish I would never repeat and never wish on anybody, but, you know, that happens. That's life, and I always tell my folks when they are in a difficult situation or in a difficult position or difficult assignment, regardless of what it is, and you know this. I mean, one thing that will happen is change. You move on to do something else, or the person that you believe is causing you the grief will move on to do something else, but there will be change. It's just getting through that tough patch, and I've had my share, but I also tell my folks that if you can look back at your assignment tour or career or whatever and if the good outweighs the bad, then it's been good. So, yeah, it doesn't go without pain and sacrifice, but you take the experiences for what they are, and you learn, and you just move on.

Chief 11 offers her mentoring experience:

I'm still going to the Top 3. I'm in the Chiefs Group. I'm president for our Chiefs Group. That's a way for mentoring. That's a way people will be able to approach you easier if they see you out there. I have a lot of people approaching me because I'm right there beside them doing things, so they know me. A lot of Airmen, they won't approach a chief because they're scared – you know.

Chief 12 describes mentoring experience during various forums:

Absolutely. As you are out – whether you are in a theater, a base theater, with 700 people or you're touring the air traffic control tower and talking to three Airmen and a Staff Sergeant – as you are talking to them, hopefully everything that you say is tied somehow to our vision and our mission and our current goals and where they fit into it. You know, it's helping them understand that out of everything happening in the Air Force, that piece that they do is

absolutely critical of the whole thing happening because they'll do a much better job of it when they believe that somebody cares about it and it's important.

Chief Caleb Hawk mentors instructors at a technical school:

These are America's sons, and you're providing them the training that's going to keep him alive on the battlefield, and you're getting a break from the action, and you're going to school, and the Air Force is paying for that? Come on. You know, how could you not be happy? So, you know, it's kind of – have to remind them every now and then of really – the value of what they are, how important they are, so...

Chief 14 is often asked for general guidance by subordinates from other bases:

I was honored that they trusted me to look at their documents, and say what do you think about this, and I'd write back to the supervisor, and say, hey, if this is what you're saying is true, I agree. So I would say on top of what I normally see, an additional five or six.

Networker

Active duty CMSgts currently employed on Randolph Air Force Base supplement their formal authority with relationships established through social networks with other chiefs, senior ranking officers, and enlisted and civilian personnel, both internal and external of the organization. It appears they can tap into these social networks with relative ease for a couple of reasons. First, as the highest ranking enlisted person they share automatic kinship with other enlisted members. Second, they garner respect from officer and civilian personnel because the number of stripes that they wear is representative of many years of honorable military service, and an assumption of high technical and managerial expertise levels.

One popular social network is the Chiefs' Group meetings during which they interact with other CMSgts assigned to Randolph. Several chiefs indicated they attend technical school and professional military graduations, and various conferences throughout the year. Most chiefs stated they often call and email other chiefs, assigned to both Randolph and other installations, to ask for advice or to collaborate and resolve common problems.

Chief 5 is involved in several social networks; some of these are based on professional development, while his membership with others is for purely personal reasons:

On days as well as downtown, at church, I'm in Toast Masters, part of Habitat for Humanity, and I had until I got here been part of Red Cross, and taught many, many classes. Since I've been here, called them a few times, said, hey, I guess you don't need me, but I repeat the call. But for 18 years I've done that and then all the different areas that you're talking about, yes, I network or build a social relationship with those types of individuals in and outside the office.

Chief 6 describes his interactions with a professional organization specific to his occupation:

Society of American Military Engineers, you get a lot of contact with the contractors working on the bases. A lot of times they ask you well, what are the enlisted guys looking for? Yeah, Sammy's, we got all these icebreakers during the award ceremony.

Chief 7 has not been involved in any social networks, but admits this would be helpful to him as a chief:

This is probably my biggest downfall right now is the socializing. I went to a couple of the Randolph Chiefs' group meetings.

Chief 9 is a proponent of using social networks, arguing they are considered a type of informal power:

Well, if many chiefs operate with this informal power, this power that comes from being a respected leader and being able to facilitate and make things happen without having direct operational or administrative control over the personnel, then networking is essential because networking is both information gathering, information sharing and I think that's what enables you to keep your commander informed and to know the pulse of the organization. And it is chiefs that get locked into that tactical arena and they do, that become the tactical experts in their area that sometimes become frustrated as everything else goes on around them and they don't feel they're apart of that process. So, to avoid that, you have to network. You have to understand that the Air Force is bigger than your functional piece. There are some functional experts that are also well informed about our Air Force and really focused on being part of the team and there are some functional experts that are stove-piped into their functional expertise in the sense that it is all about, for example, fire fighters, or flight engineers, or par-rescue men, and that everything else revolves around that, but that's not so. It's really about what can your function bring to the greater good and how much do you know how your function integrates into the larger Air Force?

Chief 10 shares this same attitude about the critical nature of networking at all enlisted levels:

So networking is very important. Not only is it important at the chief level. It's very important even with the Airmen, too, at their level. There are things that they can resolve. Socializing with the junior enlisted is just like socializing with the officers. That's a fine line. You want to be approachable. You want to make sure that they feel comfortable, but you've got to be mindful of the line of being too familiar, you know what I mean, too friendly because the good order and discipline has to be paramount, and that's a fine line, and you can cross it.

Chief 11 argues for the importance of a chief networking with others:

Oh, yeah, I'm queen of the network. Phone calls, emails, personal – I'm involved on the base a lot, pretty much. I'm still going to the Top 3. I'm in the Chiefs' Group. I'm president for our Chiefs' Group.

Chief 12 agrees that networking is beneficial at all organizational levels:

I am pretty effective mission networker. Knowing who on the base – which you learn as an NCO and you really is the thing that keeps you going is – say as the Traffic Management Flight Chief - knowing who on the base does what or who in your community does what, so when a problem comes up and you go, okay, I really need such-and-such and I don't have it. And it's a resource, and we're short on those. And I'm going to have to go ask somebody for it. The worst possible time to meet the guy who owns it is when you want his stuff. That's why you – that's why when you're an NCO you ought to go to the – to the middle-tier association, the Rising 6, whatever the local one is. Chiefs – that's why all Chiefs ought to be, I believe, at the Chiefs' group meeting getting to know the other people who are influencing decisions at your level, so that you can work things out. It helps tear down the walls.

Chief Caleb Hawk also believes in the value of networking:

The networking works. I'm not saying that the chief of network does things shady, that the chief network where the chief may tell you, this is what you need to do. You do that and I'll support you, and then you do that, and you're golden, or if there's a situation where you need to – when it's not about helping you, and it's about helping the Airman that – that's right.

Chief 14, like his peers, believes in the value of networking:

Yes, I do actually. Matter of fact I do it for the benefit of the Air Force. So the more people I can stay connected to, whether it's in the industrial sector such as Air Force Communications Electronic Association, we'll become a part of that. So where we partner with industry, I like doing that because it keeps us connected with coming out there to help us, the Air Force, meet our mission. And of course the network is professionally along with other peers and maybe senior leaders because you never know what may trickle your way to help you in your job. So that has been a real benefit for me. “Hey, did you see this from the numbered Air Force Commander?” “Well, no, I haven't heard anything.” And that

numbered Air Force Commander is not even in our command, but it's coming from someone outside of our command.

Communicate vision

Active duty CMSgts currently employed on Randolph Air Force Base are often tasked with communicating the Air Force vision. While not being the only employees charged with this task, they are all uniquely positioned within their organizations to have a substantial impact on organizational members, both superior and subordinate to them.

Chief 5 states:

Yes. I'm getting ready to go to Air Force Engineering Support Agency (AFCESA) and we're going to relook at all the team Unit Control Centers (UCC). We are going to look at all the existing training Air Force wide, School Houses, MAJCOM, Silver Flag, Guard, Reserve, Tech School, we're going to look at them together and look at the combat amongst the Airmen as we're redeveloping UCCs to see the skills they need in order to be deployable, so we're reworking all that in other words.

Chief 6 adds:

With the new changes, organization changes I try to explain to them. The military is getting smaller. So, why do we need to keep all these jobs the way we have them? You know the same thing with the merging of the [career fields] it's such a small field...so I try to – this is the Air Force big picture. You know, this is where we're going. You know, we're not trying to get rid of anyone. We're just trying to make it smaller and leaner and meaner.

Chief 7 describes a recent development concerning his occupation:

Me and my guys and so forth, we realize – and it comes with training – there are more successful organizations out there. Businesses out there, they normally have some type of business model. That's one of the things that we're trying to adapt within and we're pushing the recruiting service and I think that they're starting to understand and starting to go that way. And well, actually when my guys actually develop a recruiting model to help out recruiters and flight chiefs and so forth, we know for a fact if we can adopt something like this, it can be continually passed on. So one of the things that we're finding out right now, because of the downsizing of the Air Force, recruiting service is losing a lot of its skill sets because your recruiters are not tasked as much as they used to in the past. And as this continues, they're not going to be as skillful in certain things, and so far, building a recruiting business within a community because so much is being done by the headquarters.

Chief 9 articulates his general approach to communicating the Air Force vision:

Well, any senior level manager disseminates information about the corporation division and communicates where the organization is going, what the expectations are of the workers and tries to team build, and that's what we do from this office. I have the obligation, responsibility to communicate my commander's vision to the Airmen that serve under his charge. Across the command which encompasses two numbered Air Forces and a diverse set of locations throughout the United States, about 46,000 enlisted Airmen.

Chief 10 argues that chiefs must make the vision their own to ensure subordinate buy-in:

You have to sustain your boss' – your boss' priorities become your priorities. So the chief of staff, the chief of staff personnel, his vision becomes my vision. My job is to understand what that vision is and then try to create it, try to do it. The CEO of General Motors doesn't say, "This is a Corvette, and this is what it's going to look like." The senior guy says, "Hey, look. I want to build this nice, slick car, you know. It should look like this or have this. This is what I'm dreaming of. This is my vision," but there's going to be individual going okay. How could I build it? Let's see what his vision is and can I bring in my vision working with the tactical in reality, how can I get there? This is a nirvana-type dream state, so my job is to make that happen. So in other words, I've got to have a vision as well. It's got to be in line with the boss, but my vision is to get to the nirvana state that he wants, recognizing that nirvana will never happen, but how can I make it so? How can I get close to it. That's innovation. That's dreaming, that's getting people together, that's team building.

Chief 11 describes her involvement with communicating vision:

Meetings, he called all the chiefs and the direct division chiefs, and this is what he wanted, so now you go out and make it happen. That's one of the things that I'm seeing with chiefs is, you know, I think it depends, where they're at, but for the most part they're at least being asked for their input. Even a flight chief, you know, and a wing, if they want to be engaged, and we do have chiefs that don't, but if they want to be engaged, there is a way for them to be engaged. It's one of the things that I'm finding, so.

Chief 12 adds:

A big part of being a Command Chief is Marketing 101, taking ideas and making sure everybody understands them. You know, when you're standing up in that enlisted call, it's – you're not there just because you're the Command Chief. And even though you're going to open up the floor to the questions later, you're not there just to answer questions or to find out who is having a problem that you can fix. The main focus you're doing is helping communicate what it is we're trying to do and why it is we're trying to do it. Because our folks will not do anything they don't understand the reason for. We don't get anywhere on, well, everybody's just going to shut up and do this. Americans don't – Americans aren't blind followers.

Chief Caleb Hawk offers a unique example of how he communicates the Air Force vision:

Well, if you say at the Air Force if we get a vision, or the Air Force mission, or the – I guess the greater aspect of the Air Force, I would say yes, you know, even to the public at large. Like, I was on leave, and up in Oklahoma, and I know there's a couple of guys that I've been – have been working with to get in their retraining. So I called before I come into town, and there's a recruiter there who's got a young man who's coming in the Air Force, let's all do some physical training together.

Eyes and Ears

Active duty CMSgts currently employed on Randolph Air Force Base spend a great deal of time evaluating the workplace environment and reporting their findings to their supervisors and commanders. For example, a chief performing a routine staff visit to a unit [worksite location] located on another Air Force installation is also scanning for issues having nothing to do with the reason for the visit. If necessary, the chief may uncover a situation and report a finding to another person having functional or operation authority over the issue. While any Air Force member is encouraged to report issues of concern to a competent authority, chiefs appear to be uniquely charged with this duty based on the many stripes worn on their shirt sleeve, the number of years it takes to achieve this rank, and because they have obtained the highest enlisted rank in the Air Force. Some CMSgts, such as those serving in Command Chief or MAJCOM and higher headquarter functional positions, appear to have an implied permission to skip chain of command and address issues at whatever level they believe will take care of the situation.

Chief 5 relates a story of when he attempted to warn his boss [group commander] of some organizational concerns he observed:

So I'll give you an example. There was a Colonel. She was group commander. I worked for her. I went into her office and I said, Ma'am – I was a new chief, and I said, Ma'am, we have some issues in the new organization. She patted me on the back so to speak verbally and kind of said you're a new chief. Didn't say these words specifically, but this was the gist of it. You know, you're a new chief. You really don't know what you're talking about, appreciate it, I hear you, have a good day. That's what I got out of the conversation. So about a year later, I'm getting ready to depart that location for another assignment. I'm at the hotel room, you know, I'm stinky, I've been packing all night. I'm getting ready to

leave. I hadn't shaved in three days and she calls me on my cell. Hey chief, I need to see you. I said, man, you know, I signed off the base. I no longer – I'm literally driving out the gate and you call me. Do you have a minute? Yes, ma'am, I have a minute. I come back and I sit down with her and as we're sitting down talking, she has the deputy commander there. She is there. So she said chief, I'm having a lot of problems and I said, ma'am, you know, are you having emotional breakdown? I'm just joking. And she said no, chief, I'm getting other squadron commanders [subordinate to her] and group commanders calling me and going we're not doing this. We're not accomplishing this, and oh by the way, I feel that within our organization, we're still not doing – oh gee, isn't that what I said? I don't have to be a chief to see there were problems in the organization.--The chief can fix little things, but I don't have the authority to say you will do the following. I don't. So when she brought me in, she said you noticed or you made these observations. Can you share them with us? And so I did, and then when of course, the deputy commander said I don't agree with you, and I said what's your role in it? What is your position? What's your authority? Well, I don't have any. I looked at colonel and I went, boom, there's your problem. There's another one of your problems. So all the things that I noticed in the squadron I thought needed to be fixed were for morale, for mission accomplishment, all those things and to make the organization smoother, I had brought to her attention – I was being her eyes and ears. She didn't accept it because she was a new commander, but when a commander says I want you to be my eyes and ears, I think that's what he or she is saying. If they're saying, I want you to be a weasel and tattletale on people, they have come to the wrong person because that's not my objective. That doesn't make an organization run better.

Chief 6 offer some general views on this subject:

If you hear about the problem, let me know because we need to take care of it. If there is something going on that I need to know about – if I don't need to know about it, then you know, don't tell me, but if something is going to come back to bite us, let me know in advance before, you know, the general come down on me and...

Chief 8 provides more insight into this behavior:

I focus on two things. I don't ever tell them what I think they already know. I make some assumptions for them, so I'm not the person always running up hey sir....I tend to focus on the real good stuff that I think he or she might have missed...I use indicators to try and figure that out. When you're sitting with a guy, in staff meetings twice a week and see what's all is on his plate and hear him talk and make comments, you kind of figure out real quick what I think he missed. I will say, I really don't think you thought that through and I'll just give him notes, based on I have derived from my eyes and ears. It ain't necessarily my personal assessment. Sometimes your Teflon-coated, slides right off your back. Other times, you get a brick wall in your face just doing 60 miles an hour and then there's other times where it resonates with him, you just get an open door and everybody singing Kumbaya real quick. You know, so it really depends. That's the first thing I tried to do is study my boss and you get bios, stern to stern, where they've been, what's your strengths and weaknesses in terms of MAJCOM complete survey, so I can always find an angle and what their hot buttons are, and are not.

Chief 9 takes Chief 8's argument a bit further:

As a chief, I've never had a commander ask me that question because that is in fact, in many ways, what I am. I am not only their eyes and their ears, I'm also their mouth in the sense that I communicate for them. But isn't that true of any leader? I mean, here's the thing about command. Really, command can only influence about two concentric rings of leadership. So, a commander can influence, wing commander can influence group commanders and squadron commanders, that's really two levels or two in the line of communication. It's more difficult to reach beyond that because you can't carry the message to individual Airmen, and every organization that serves that commander really strives to show that individual their best. The great thing about a chief is they have the ability to walk seamlessly from the upper levels of command to sit at the round table with the senior leaders at four stars [generals] and the three stars and the two stars and discuss big Air Force, but without threat, can walk right into the lowest levels of the organization and communicate with the Airmen. And to walk through those organizations and see them without their purple robes on to see what they really like and pulse their morale and their welfare to see how they're contributing to the mission, to assess their professionalism in a very unthreatened way. That is a great gift that a chief has. It's only a gift if they judiciously use that power and that means what they bring back to the commander, and how they communicate with the commander, what they see becomes very critical. And so I will tell you that I share less with my commander than more, and typically when I share it, I share it in a general sense. Because what's important to him is the general health and welfare of the organization as a whole, and very rarely do we need to talk about surgical issues, about those kinds of things that have a very pointed and negative impact on the mission of Air Education Training Command. Typically, I should be able to deal with those at the lowest level if I'm good at what I do.

Chief 10 adds:

As a chief, if you've been around long enough, you've heard it a lot, and to be honest with you we shouldn't be asked. It should be done automatically because you can understand their role within the structure. The officer is there, and I was taught that the officer is a manager, okay? The officer is an officer. There are lines and divisions...The officer will look at their chief or their senior enlisted person, doesn't have to be a chief, and they go, "Okay. What's the reality? What is the reality?" And they want you to be honest. Obviously they want you to be – because what they're going to do is say, "Hey, Chief. I heard this," and the last thing you want to be is, "Well, wow, I never heard that."

Chief 12 describes specific tasks he accomplishes as the commander's eyes and ears:

That's a fundamental piece of being Command Chief. You are a set of enlisted eyes and ears. At the same time, I'm looking at how does everybody's uniform look. If you walk into an organization where you see several uniforms that are not well, that organization has got a discipline problem. So I'm looking at that because it helps me assess leadership. And it would depend on where I was and what I was doing; whether I'm assessing the leadership of

the Chief that runs that place or whatnot. I'm looking at are things in good repair, all of that. And I'm trying to assess how we're doing because if morale falters or discipline falters, the mission will falter with it. And we're responsible for – we train all the pilots, all the aircrews for the Air Force. So it's important that we watch how standards and discipline and those kinds of things are going. Also, I'm responsible – because I am responsible for the Commander for looking at training and morale and things like that. If I walk into a dormitory, for example, where the paint's peeling and the pool table is broken, and things are in poor repair, nobody feels good about themselves or about their Air Force if they're housed in substandard quarters. So that would be an indication to me that we have a problem to fix. And I wouldn't know initially whether it's a problem with the people who run that dormitory or whether it's a resource problem. I don't necessarily go back and tell them everything I've seen or heard. If it's something I can take care of, great. And it's not just to find things that are going poorly. It's also to make sure he's aware of what's going very, very well because he's going to be making constant decisions about leadership at Wings. It's important that he knows where things look like, to me anyway, that they're going really well. That's just another data point for him.

Chief 14 describes tasks he performed as being the commander's eyes and ears:

I had a senior officer tell me that. I said, well, what do you mean? And the response was “If morale is high, I need to know. If morale is low, I need to know.” That was good for me. Anything more than that whether it be dropping a dime on someone or anything like that or being stoopigeon. I'm not a good politician and I have a tendency to speak my mind which is probably why I didn't get promoted as fast as I thought I would, but that's okay. Well, I think it's what's required of us as a Senior NCO. We are, according to AFI 36-2618 we are required to monitor issues that may effect morale or effect a mission. So that's our responsibility. Now, along with that, we got to fix it. So is fixing it going back and tattle tailing to the commander? No. Fixing it is presenting a plan to the commander; here's why I think it's low because of all our guys have been busting tail over the last four months trying to fix it. Okay. Got it. Okay. Here's how I bet we could fix it. Staff Sergeant So-and-so came up with a plan to knock it out.

Run interference

Active duty CMSgts currently employed on Randolph Air Force Base, Texas, find themselves in a unique situation and often times have to either substitute and / or supplement for their supervisors and commanders. This does not mean they perform the supervisor's job in their absence.

Commanders have other subordinate officer personnel who perform their duties in these situations.

It means several other things from representing them in meetings, providing further explanation of

controversial policies to organizational members in smaller forums, and even resolving critical issues before they create widespread organizational conflict.

Chief 5 shares a few examples during which he ran interference for his supervisor and commander:

I've been asked to go to meetings for other commanders. I've been asked to go to meetings for generals. I've been asked to go to meetings in place of a General. I'm going to a meeting right now for him. But if you're saying I need you to put off this person, I've done that too because at this particular time, they [commander] have other things they're doing and I can answer or I can accomplish that tasking without getting him involved.

Chief 8 offers his experience:

He'll give me a line. I want to get beyond this line. You know, if you can't handle it, come to me. Well, I don't try to ever go to my boss, and I say I couldn't handle something. They give you the formal authority, you should be able to execute it. He's got so much on his plate, and I'm just a very small segment of that that even if he's going to spend 20 percent of his duty day managing my function, then he's got the wrong person managing that function.

Chief 9 argues that running interference is more of augmenting his leadership behaviors to encompass those which are normally desired from his commander and supervisor:

Now there are different skills – every leader brings different tools and skills to the table. Some commanders are more skilled than others. As a chief, you must sometimes do your best to overcome people that might be deficient in certain leadership skills. That is, what you bring to the senior leader is how you advocate for the people that serve the senior leader, it just all depends on the leadership style. But at the end of the day, it's my responsibility to adapt my style to my commander's leadership, not vice versa. And if you want to look at running interference in a different way, as you talked about it, you could say that my job or task is to complement my senior leader's leadership style. And there are places where I may have to adapt my own style of leadership to best complement what might be perceived as their weaknesses. From my perception, if my senior leader is not a great communicator then I a great communicator on their behalf. So, I'm making clear what their vision is. If my senior leader is a stern authoritarian, I adapt my leadership style to make sure that I can buffer that with the appropriate level of compassion and still not compromise my service to that commander. It is not to go toe to toe with them, it is to complement them. So, interference is a tough word. If my senior leader is not comfortable with conflict, or addressing people for substandard performance, over here with this other particular leader, I might be working as a buffer. Now, it's my responsibility to help communicate that leader's vision if they are not – if they do not believe people are performing to capacity or executing that vision. So, then it becomes my responsibility to do that and if you do that successfully, then it's not interference. It really is complementing. Different approach, isn't it?

Chief 10 describes running interference as the chief being a more appropriate person to resolve a particular issue:

[...]but chiefs are viewed as honest brokers, and the reason for that is, I mean, what else – you have no agenda. There should be no agenda with you. Everything should be truthful, and there are officers that tell me there are two people that I would talk to and listen and believe. That's an airman basic because he doesn't know no better. He would tell me the truth, right? And a chief because he has no reason to lie. None, but you've got to be that, though. You've got to be that because again, why are you there? Why are you there? So, yeah. So have I run interference? Of course. To me it's like, "Hey, Chief, this is something that I think the chief can be more effective in as a chief." Again, based on rank, position, status of a chief, and when you walk in, I mean, there's this thing, oh, shit. The chief. The chief, but it isn't like doing his work for him or he's chicken. It's just one of those things, "Hey, look. What do you think? I think maybe you can probably be more effective as the chief. I'll make an assessment of it. We'll discuss it. We'll bounce around my views. I'll look at all angles, and then I'll make a decision." I'll say, "Yeah. Okay. I got you. See your point," or, "Don't think so because" – again, it's being honest and taking care of the boss. And also when we talk about teaching, I have to teach my officer, too, just like that Airman, especially when he's a young officer, you know, major and below. That's what I call a young officer. If you're a major and below, I see you just as an airman, which means I've got to guide you, too.

Chief 11 describes running her involvement with running interference:

Not necessarily used the word but, yeah. Just take care of the situation. I don't have time right now. I have other things I need to do. Can you handle it?

Chief 12 says that although no commander has asked him, he has performed this task on occasion:

I have, in social situations, you always watch and see who it is there is – you get the guy out there who thinks that he'd like to spend the whole cocktail hour telling the General about his personal plan. And at that point, I mean they're going to go over and pull the General off for a sidebar or become very interested in the plan and, "Hey, come with me for a second. I need to get my notebook." And the next thing we know, we get out there. But I've never had – I've never had one of them say, "Hey, I really need you to run interference on this one." Not at this level.

Chief 14 states that although never being asked directly, he feels he did perform this same task as his fellow chiefs:

I've heard that. I don't recall anyone asking me to run interference for them. I do know that people have asked about covering on certain sensitive issues within organizations that I've supervised. And so we sit down and we talk about it, and so we know we're going to have some broken glass, okay, so right now we don't have to worry about any damage control

because the cat hasn't been let out of the bag or anything like that, so where do we go from here? What's the position? Is this the right position for the Air Force? If it's the right thing to do for this organization then this works and this unit, the squadron – if this is right, I have no problem saying this is what we need to do. Period.

Summary

In summary, this chapter introduced the 14 CMSgts who participated in this study; 4 CMSgts in pilot and 10 CMSgts in the actual study. Their education and training accomplishments, work experiences, and their significant leadership behaviors were provided as well. A brief summary of each participant was given to provide further insight in their experiences.

The last part of this chapter presented significant leadership behaviors – the findings - based on the original research questions and using the participants' own words. Enlisted Performance Reports (EPR) were reviewed also, but not many chiefs provided these documents to the researcher.

Overall, 12 significant leadership behaviors were identified during this study, which were placed into eight categories. The eight categories are: Technical; Counselor; Problem Solver; Manager; Networker; Communicate Vision; Eyes and Ears; Run Interference.

The Technical category contains one sub-category: Assign Task / Communicate Expectations. The Counselor category is comprised of Influence, Supporter, and Facilitator. Finally, the Manager category is made up of Decision Maker, Advisor, and Mentor.

Chapter 5

Conclusions and Recommendations

As a final review, the purpose of this research was to determine significant leadership behaviors of active duty Air Force (AF) Chief Master Sergeants (CMSgt) currently employed on Randolph Air Force Base, in San Antonio, Texas. Three primary research questions served as an umbrella from which to gather data. Once again, these questions are:

1. What sources can be used to ascertain active duty Air Force CMSgt leadership behaviors?
2. Is there a common set of behaviors?
3. If there are such behaviors, which adult learning methods facilitate their acquisition?

Research Question 1

Chapter 1 presented a variety of methods which could be used to ascertain active duty AF CMSgt leadership behaviors. Because this study was about exploring the leadership experiences of AF CMSgts, a phenomenological qualitative research approach was the method of choice used to collect the data. The instrument used was a semi-structured interview guide based on Dr. Gary Yukl's taxonomy and associated Managerial Practices Survey (MPS) and Air Force Instruction (AFI) 36-2618, Enlisted Force Structure which outlines general responsibilities of CMSgts. Initially, the Enlisted Performance Report (EPR) was introduced to the study and it was thought that this document would produce results significant to the research. Indeed, participant EPRs did describe active duty CMSgt behaviors, but it was difficult to decide whether or not these behaviors were significant CMSgt leadership behaviors. Why exactly is this? For starters, although EPRs are completed using a standard document, the supervisors differed in their writing style. Another issue is that the EPR's main purpose is to evaluate a chief's task accomplishment and assess potential to perform other duties, rather than differentiate between whether the task accomplished was in fact a

significant leadership behavior. As a result, the EPR was not considered to contain a comprehensive CMSgt leadership behavior list but instead regarded as just a summary document of what a chief accomplished during the past evaluation period. Finally, most chiefs elected not to provide this document, fearing that it may fall into the hands of someone who might utilize it for negative purposes.

Because only 4 of 10 chiefs provided EPRs and some of these participants did not provide all of the documents needed for the study, only limited commonalities were found between participant interviews and EPR documentation. They were: Problem Solver, Advisor, and Mentor. Although EPR findings alone were limited, the three common significant leadership behaviors do support identical findings derived from participant interview data.

Research Questions 2 and 3(acquisition and recommendations)

Chapter 4 presented the findings regarding significant leadership behaviors of active duty Air Force CMSgts currently employed on Randolph Air Force Base, in San Antonio, Texas. Overall, 12 significant leadership behaviors were identified during this study; these were then placed into eight categories. The eight categories are: Technical; Counselor; Problem Solver; Manager; Networker; Communicate Vision; Eyes and Ears; Run Interference. The Technical category contains one sub-category: Assign Task / Communicate Expectations. The Counselor category is comprised of Influence, Supporter, and Facilitator. Finally, the Manager category is made up of Decision Maker, Advisor, and Mentor. What follows are final conclusions regarding each significant leadership behavior along with some observations and recommended adult education and training interventions for practitioner consideration. One item to note during the next section is several significant leadership or support behaviors contributing to their acquisition is already being done at least one of the Air Force EPME schools or a process or program exist elsewhere in organization.

1. Technical (Assign Task / Communicate Expectations) – CMSgts participating in this study began their technical training by attending an Air Force technical school. After tech school, they are assigned to an AF installation (at base level) and began upgrade training to increase their skill competence. During the years between initial skill training and reaching the CMSgt level, participants work at different AF installations, and at times at MAJCOM and higher headquarters, and perform various jobs to gain technical, leadership, and managerial experience. Chief 7 summarizes his technical acquisition experiences, which is representative of the other chief participants:

You become your regular enlisted recruiter. You get to know how to go out and look for, build a business, and recruit 17 to 27-year-old people. After that, I went to become an officer recruiter. Then, from there you go to the MEP Station. This is where you learn about all of the initial entry processing that's involved and the paperwork involved, and the coordinating with headquarters down here and finding people jobs and selling people on accepting certain jobs and so forth. I did that for three years and then I became a flight supervisor, who is responsible for, instead of recruiters, training those recruiters, giving them their assigned goals, making sure that they achieve their goals. Then, I went into operations, where I actually worked in the squadron. I was in marketing for the squadron, going out and training recruiters on how to market themselves in the Air Force within their community. It was almost like a PA for a squadron but you're not – you know, you're dealing with the community. Next, I was in training and did a lot of tours with the training team, which helped me get ready for the job of superintendent.

One issue concerning the technical aspect of the CMSgts who participated in this study had to do with what is considered the actual technical responsibilities of their job. Most chiefs started out working on aircraft, construction, or law enforcement, but as chiefs ended up working in administrative positions and leading programs which support the technical occupations, rather than having to perform the job themselves. This leads to the question of how much technical training, if any, should chiefs be required to complete after reaching this level? Participants did not say they completed any mandatory technical training after reaching the CMSgt level. The answer may stem from the fact that chiefs in this study were assigned to MAJCOM positions for three to four years

and are then reassigned to a subsequent base level position that, on the whole, required closer association with the technical occupation. Based on the interview data, it is unknown if this close association provides sufficient technical familiarity for all CMSgts to successfully perform their technically related tasks. At least two participants mentioned they had to actually perform technical jobs at the CMSgt level. For example, Chief 8 stated that

[...] as a flight engineer, then I'm – even as a Chief Master Sergeant, I had to retain my technical competency in the aircraft in which I was a qualified crewmember.

Chief Caleb (Chief 13) asserted

[t]he majority of the chiefs in combat control are at the squadron level, and they're deploying, doing combat operations.

These observations support a recommendation that a comprehensive review be conducted of CMSgt technical related duties across all Air Force occupations to consider some level of reoccurring technical training to ensure they remain capable of performing critical technical tasks, and maintain sufficient awareness of important technical skills.

2. Counselor – This significant behavior area is comprised of the three leadership behaviors described below:

- Influence – CMSgt participants in this study appear to use this leadership behavior simultaneously with other behaviors mentioned earlier. Their position in the Air Force organizational structure provides the perfect situation for them to implement this behavior. Interview data suggests they influence people, programs, situations, etc. The critical issue concerning influence behavior is whether chiefs act in an ethical way and refrain from abuse of this behavior within the scope of their duties. Chief 8 drives home the point that chiefs should not show undo influence regarding their responsibilities:

The reality with that is I've never been the perfect chief. I'll be the first to admit it. You know, I'm like everybody else. If there's a game in town, and you know, I've got a family to make happy and a wife that's trying to get her thing squared away...but I was never bad. I was never criminal. I was never trying to screw my buddy but I was trying to get my angle worked just like everybody else. You know, I knew a general so and so and colonel such and such and they were trying to help me out...in this job here, and really the one just prior, I learned that my needle is set too far to self interest. --so I tried to adjust and I have had to adjust in this job. Because sometimes you have to tell the chief take one for the team, I've done everything I can for them and I know you ain't getting a good deal, but I need you to take it for the team because there's no other way around it, you know. And so if you're going to do that, you kind of got to be the guy that's going to take one for the team too.

Although the Air Force has a published set of core values, provides ethics training during its Enlisted Professional Military Education (EPME) programs, and enlisted promotional study guides contain this information, emphasis appears to be more on classic management theories such as situational behavior, motivation, etc...versus specific conduct in accordance with these core values.

These observations support a recommendation for an increased emphasis on ethics training. One option is to offer an annual online ethics compliance course; this is done in several other organizations. The course acts as a periodic reminder of acceptable ethical behavior. The Air Force has the technology to implement and track completion status. They also have the talent to create the course or they can purchase it commercially and tailor it to suit any unique requirements.

Participants could complete this training at their leisure using a desk top computer (self-directed learning).

- Supporter – CMSgts participants in this study drove home the importance of this behavior.

Chief 5 described this facet of the CMSgt role most succinctly:

I'm the chief. I don't have to slam my hand on the table. I don't have to yell at people. I don't have to do those things. I suggest, I inspire...

Webster's dictionary defines a supporter as a person who advocates or supports (Neufeldt, 1997). Interview data resulted in several examples through which the chiefs indicated they were advocates for subordinate enlisted employees. Additionally, they firmly support the notion that employment of supportive behaviors is positively correlated to leadership effectiveness. They offered numerous examples to argue that the utilization of supportive behaviors was the difference between success and failure, whether the support in question was of people, programs, or other entities entirely. It is obvious this behavior was emphasized to the chiefs early in their military career starting with basic military training and continues on during the four Air Force EPME schools.

These observations support a recommendation to continue emphasizing supportive behaviors during Air Force EPME programs to ensure continual opportunities for further developing this behavior.

- Facilitator – CMSgts participants in this study asserted they are in a unique position within their organizations. As Chief 9 describes it:

The great thing about a chief is they have the ability to walk seamlessly from the upper levels of command to sit at the round table with the senior leaders at four stars and the three stars and the two stars and discuss big Air Force, but without threat, can walk right into the lowest levels of the organization and communicate with the Airmen. And to walk through those organizations and see them without their purple robes on to see what they really like and pulse their morale and their welfare to see how they're contributing to the mission, to assess their professionalism in a very unthreatened way. That is a great gift that a chief has.

Webster's dictionary defines a facilitator as someone who makes something easy or easier (Neufeldt, 1997). This behavior, like supporting, is one of those behaviors that is difficult to separate from other leadership behaviors in order to identify specific training and education interventions. Facilitating is most often used in conjunction with other behaviors to enhance a given situation. Interview data indicates the chiefs gravitate toward this behavior because they learn early

in their career that much of their success is dependent upon on the capability of subordinate employees to have all information and any barriers removed which impede mission accomplishment. Chiefs use facilitation behaviors to enhance their subordinates' skill development and to mitigate organizational conflict as well. These observations support a recommendation to continue facilitation skills training as part of existing Air Force EPME programs.

3. Problem solver – CMSgt participants in this study spend most of their time solving problems.

Most indicated they acquired this behavior through different job experiences and participation in Air Force EPME programs. Chief 12 summarizes:

We do some of that stuff in professional military education. But I don't think that you can get to the top levels in our Air Force – enlisted or officer – unless you get really good at problem solving along the way.

This behavior, more than others identified in this study, is the foundation upon which chiefs implement many other leadership behaviors. These behaviors include counseling subordinates to resolve their issues, mitigating organizational conflict, advising supervisors and commanders, being the commander's eyes and ears, or running interference. Interview data indicates that problem solving is a CMSgt leadership behavior that is well integrated during all levels of Air Force EPME programs.

One recommendation to enhance the chiefs' problem solving capabilities is allowing them to perform a special duty outside (situated cognition) their primary occupation before they reach the CMSgt level. Why? Interview data suggests that chief participants with special duty experience possess better problem solving capabilities or at least have a more broad set of experiences from which to resolve organizational problems. Chiefs 5, 8, 9, and 12 of this study all had special duty experience before reaching the CMSgt level. Chief 5 said it best, explaining how he sharpened his problem solving capabilities:

[The Air Force Civil Engineering Support Agency] (AFCESA) is where I gained a lot of those skills and abilities. I don't think I would be as successful today...I've expanded my skill base, my toolbox, I am far ahead of some of my peers in that area because of AFCESA.

One final recommendation is to afford chiefs the opportunity to attend project management skills training. Chiefs in this study are all program managers of some sort and would benefit from the knowledge of project management concepts.

4. Manager – CMSgt participants in this study indicated they received much of their managerial training through participating in Air Force EPME programs and various work experiences. Chief 14 summarizes this:

Now, of course, we get a professional military education. That was great. That was great because they taught us the fundamentals of delegation, but until you see it in action, that's another thing. Until you implement it and try it a couple of times yourself, it's also another thing. So it was a mixture of those three things. Being taught, observing, and then doing myself and passing, and seeing what I was taught and what I learned over the years, it doesn't necessarily come out to that formula every time.

Transcription data indicated that CMSgt managerial behavior is comprised of three other behaviors. The following describes these behaviors:

- Decision maker – CMSgt participants in this study subscribed to the notion of allowing the situation, affected individuals, and other competing variables such as time, cost, location etc...to lead their specific decision making actions. Chief 9 said it best:

A good chief or any good leader will learn who the experts are and whose counsel they can trust and then gather that information and make a decision. In instances where change may be large and it needs to be socialized, absolutely. In those cases where expediency and necessity drives change, no, it just happens. It's situational.

Interview data suggests that the chiefs' decision making capability is honed through their experiences (situated cognition). Another contributor for some participants was some form of mentoring relationship with a senior ranking member, enlisted or officer.

These observations support a recommendation that Air Force assignment officials continue to provide existing duty assignment rotation opportunities for enlisted employees to facilitate a broad exposure to a variety of decision making experiences.

A final recommendation to enhance the chiefs' decision making capabilities is establishment of a formalized mentorship program. Study participants who had a mentor or two during their climb to the CMSgt level appeared to have more decision making management tools in their tool belt and possessed knowledge of other leadership behaviors not available in any textbook or training course.

Chief 7 describes the value of a mentor:

I knew a couple of chiefs out there and the production superintendents out there in the field units were doing a great job. I was happy to have the opportunity to go out there and shadow them for about a week. I actually picked two chiefs and two separate times and went out and shadowed them. Picked up a lot of stuff from them and that was very valuable.

Chief 10 explains further:

I grew up with amazing people. I started out as an Airman on a remote location over Kunsan, Airman Basic right out of tech school. It started there, and I was just very fortunate and blessed to be surrounded by some amazing folks throughout my career at all levels, you know, peer groups, officers, enlisted alike, chiefs...

- Advisor – CMSgt participants in this study indicated they were top advisors to commanders for mostly enlisted issues, but for other issues as well. Webster's dictionary defines an advisor as someone who gives advice, an opinion, a recommendation, or to counsel another person (Neufeldt, 1997). Why are these chiefs sought out by other senior ranking officers for their advice? Chief 9's response sums it up best:

And you know you've arrived when a group commander, a very seasoned colonel walks through your office door, closes the door and sits down to talk to you about something before going to the wing commander, because they want your advice or counsel. You've earned their trust, you're credible with them, and they appreciate what you bring.

One observation concerning advising is trying to ascertain the actual skills which enable a chief to successfully perform this behavior. Transcription data offers four skills for consideration.

One skill which contributes to advising behavior is conflict management. Chief 12's shares his thoughts concerning this skill:

A lot of times when you get conflict out of hand at an Air Force organization at the senior levels, it's because both parties have allowed their ego to become more important than the mission. And I will – I will purposely – as if the other person starts to ramp up, I will ramp back. If they speak louder, I'll speak softer. I'm not going to give up the point. I may have to go back and come around to it later.

A second advising support skill is negotiation. Chief 13 indirectly addresses this support skill:

I've just been real fortunate to work for some good guys, and he's one of them, and he has asked me a few times at situations that had recently commented that hey, I like it when you bring your input in too because it's unemotional and do it within one or two minutes and we're done– so he's called me in for several different occasions.

Chief 8 provides further evidence of the existence of this skill when describing the kind of advice he offers to senior officer personnel:

I focus on two things. I don't ever tell them what I think they already know. I make some assumptions for them, so I'm not the person always running up hey sir....I tend to focus on the real good stuff that I think he or she might have missed...I use indicators to try and figure that out. When you're sitting with a guy, staffing twice a week and see what's all is on his plate and hear him talk and make comments, you kind of figure out real quick what I think he missed. I will say, I really don't think you thought that through and I'll just give him notes...

A third advising support behavior is effective oral and written communication skills. Most chiefs in this study stated they communicate with other organizational members using a variety of communication mediums. Chiefs communicate advice during face-to-face meetings, but also when they provide support or non support statements for Enlisted Personnel Reports (EPR) decorations,

and other situations requiring their commander's signature. Oral and written communication skills are taught extensively throughout all levels of Air Force EPME programs.

A final advising support skill is technical competence. Why? Most advice chiefs provide falls into two categories; personnel and technical related issues. A chief must have extensive technical knowledge in their primary career field to be an effective and most importantly, a trusted advisor to his or her superiors. Air Force technical school, follow on training, and years of working experiences provide the required technical competence needed at the CMSgt level. As a reminder, technical competence is also a significant leadership behavior finding for this study and contains a few specific considerations in that section as well.

These observations support a recommendation to integrate basic conflict management and negotiation skills training into existing Air Force EPME programs.

- Mentor – CMSgt participants in this study spend a lot of time mentoring subordinate enlisted and junior officer employees. Webster's dictionary defines a mentor as a trusted counselor or guide (Neufeldt, 1997). Chiefs participate in several mentorship opportunities such as enlisted and junior officer discussion panels, and small group and one-on-one discussion with personnel during visits to other installations. Chief 9 supports this assertion stating:

Well, it is my responsibility and task to nurture and grow the leadership potential, not only in enlisted Airmen, but also in our officers. In fact, here in our education training command, we do a very thorough squadron commanders officers course. And I actually have an entire instruction block in that, and we rate those because my commander is all about in process improvement. And that particular block gets rated very highly and we evaluate that every time, and it's the time that I as a seasoned and experienced chief master sergeant talk to commanders, talk to potential commanders, lieutenant colonels about command and how to command.

Mentoring, like advising, is a behavior that requires other skills be mastered before someone can be capable of performing this behavior. Transcription data offers a couple skills for consideration.

One mentoring support behavior is effective oral and written communication skills. Oral and written communication skills were addressed under the discussion for advising behaviors and are taught extensively during all levels of Air Force EPME programs.

A final mentoring support skill is technical competence. Why? Most mentoring chiefs provide falls into two categories; personnel and technical related issues. Just like with advising, a chief must have extensive technical knowledge in their primary career field to be an effective mentor. As a reminder, technical competence is also a significant leadership behavior finding for this study and contains a few specific considerations as well.

These observations support a recommendation to continue providing the support skill training, mentioned earlier, for chiefs to become effective mentors.

5. Networker – Most CMSgt participants in this study spend a lot of time networking with other Air Force employees and other individuals external to the organization. Webster’s dictionary defines networking as the exchange of information or services among individuals. It is described as the cultivation of productive relationships for employment or business as well (Neufeldt, 1997). Most chiefs in this study primarily networked with other chiefs through membership with the local Chiefs Group association. This is a non-profit organization located at Air Force installations and members consist of active duty, guard or reserve, and retired CMSgts. Chief 9 best articulates the value of networking:

Well, if many chiefs operate with this informal power, this power that comes from being a respected leader and being able to facilitate and make things happen without having direct operational or administrative control over the personnel, then networking is essential because networking is both information gathering, information sharing and I think that’s what enables you to keep your commander informed and to know the pulse of the organization.

Chief 7 comments about his failure to network:

This is probably my biggest downfall right now is the socializing. I went to a couple of the Randolph Chiefs group meetings.

An individual cannot become an effective networker just because they have achieved a certain military rank. Networking skills must be enhanced through years of experience. Chief 10 says:

Not only is it important at the chief level. It's very important even with the Airmen, too, at their level. There are things that they can resolve.

An observation concerning networking is trying to ascertain the actual skills which enable a chief to successfully perform this behavior. Transcription data offers three skills for consideration.

One networking support skill is technical competence. Why? Most networking chiefs provide concerns some critical piece of technical related information specific to their career field. Just like with advising and mentoring, chiefs must have extensive technical knowledge in their primary career field to be considered a credible networking source. As a reminder, technical competence is also a significant leadership behavior finding for this study and contains a few specific considerations as well.

Another networking support behavior is effective oral and written communication skills. Oral and written communication skills were addressed under the discussion for advising behaviors and are taught extensively during all levels of Air Force EPME programs.

A final networking support skill is negotiation. This skill was mentioned during advising behaviors and seems plausible to support this behavior also because chiefs will often network with others to negotiate an agreement or head off organizational conflict. Chief 12 speaks to this observation:

I am pretty effective mission networker. Knowing who on the base – which you learn as an NCO and you really is the thing that keeps you going is – say as the Traffic Management

Flight Chief - knowing who on the base does what or who in your community does what, so when a problem comes up and you go, okay, I really need such-and-such and I don't have it. And it's a resource, and we're short on those. And I'm going to have to go ask somebody for it. The worst possible time to meet the guy who owns it is when you want his stuff. That's why you – that's why when you're an NCO you ought to go to the – to the middle-tier association, the Rising 6, whatever the local one is. Chiefs – that's why all Chiefs ought to be, I believe, at the Chiefs' group meeting getting to know the other people who are influencing decisions at your level, so that you can work things out. It helps tear down the walls.

These observations support a recommendation to continue providing the support skill training, mentioned earlier, for chiefs to become effective networkers.

6. Communicate vision - CMSgt participants in this study indicated they are often tasked with speaking to other organizational members about the Air Force vision. Usually it is communicated to members as being the commander's vision, but is considered the same for practical purposes.

Chiefs market this vision continuously; it's integrated into their daily routine. Chief 10 concludes that:

You have to sustain your boss' – your boss' priorities become your priorities. So the chief staff, the chief of staff personnel, his vision becomes my vision. My job is to understand what that vision is and then try to create it, try to do it.

An observation concerning communicating vision is trying to ascertain the actual skills which enable a chief to successfully perform this behavior. Transcription data offers one skill for consideration.

One critical support behavior is effective oral and written communication skills. Oral and written communication skills were addressed under the discussion for advising behaviors and are taught extensively during all levels of Air Force EPME programs.

Transcription data mentioned no other specific skills to support communicating vision behavior. Some researcher assumptions include active participation in forums which provides this knowledge.

Some chiefs, especially those assigned to MAJCOM and higher positions, will obtain this information as part of their primary duties. But chiefs assigned to base level positions also influence (behavior finding) enlisted and officer members within their organization and must be able to articulate this same vision. Local Chiefs Group organizations, ad hoc meetings with the installation commander and other senior officers, and selected Air Force literature are some ways chiefs can obtain this information.

These observations support a recommendation to continue providing communication support skill training and to consider other researcher assumptions for chiefs to become effective communicators of the Air Force vision.

7. Eyes and ears – Most CMSgt participants in this study indicated they perform this behavior for their commander. This behavior is performed as they carry out other duties. Chief 9 describes why chiefs are especially qualified to perform this behavior:

The great thing about a chief is they have the ability to walk seamlessly from the upper levels of command to sit at the round table with the senior leaders at four stars (generals) and the three stars and the two stars and discuss big Air Force, but without threat, can walk right into the lowest levels of the organization and communicate with the Airmen. And to walk through those organizations and see them without their purple robes on to see what they really like and pulse their morale and their welfare to see how they're contributing to the mission, to assess their professionalism in a very unthreatened way. That is a great gift that a chief has.

An interesting observation concerning being the commander's eye and ears is that although most chiefs in this study mentioned they perform the behavior, some stated they have never been asked to do it. This begs the question: Then why do you do it? This question was not asked because the nature of the study was to only identify and not focus on why or comment on the merits of performing such behaviors.

A second observation concerns ascertaining an accurate description of this behavior. Chief 12

describes it as:

You are a set of enlisted eyes and ears. At the same time, I'm looking at how does everybody's uniform look. If you walk into an organization where you see several uniforms that are not well; that organization has got a discipline problem. So I'm looking at that because it helps me assess leadership. And it would depend on where I was and what I was doing; whether I'm assessing the leadership of the Chief that runs that place or whatnot. I'm looking at are things in good repair, all of that. And I'm trying to assess how we're doing because if morale falters or discipline falters, the mission will falter with it.

The third observation is trying to ascertain the actual skills which enable a chief to successfully perform this behavior. Transcription data offers no direct evidence of support skills necessary to successfully perform as the commander's eyes and ears. This behavior could be considered a higher-order leadership behavior because it requires the chief to have a few other significant behaviors found during this study as prerequisite capabilities.

One assumed eyes and ears support skill is problem solver (behavior finding). Chief 14 offers the following evidence:

We are, according to AFI 36-2618 we are required to monitor issues that may affect morale or affect a mission. So that's our responsibility. Now, along with that, we got to fix it. So is fixing it going back and tattle taling to the commander? No. Fixing it is presenting a plan to the commander; here's why I think it's low because of all our guys have been busting tail over the last four months trying to fix it.

Another critical support behavior is effective oral and written communication skills were addressed under the discussion for and written communication skills. advising behaviors and are taught extensively during all levels of Air Force EPME programs. Chief 5's experience providing candid feedback to his commander serves as evidence:

So when she brought me in, she said you noticed or you made these observations. Can you share them with us? And so I did, and then when of course, the deputy commander said I don't agree with you, and I said what's your role in it? What is your position? What's your authority? Well, I don't have any. I looked at colonel and I went, boom, there's your problem. There's another one of your problems. So all the things that I noticed in the squadron I thought needed to be fixed were for morale, for mission accomplishment, all those things and to make the organization smoother, I had brought to her attention – I was

being her eyes and ears. She didn't accept it because she was a new commander, but when a commander says I want you to be my eyes and ears, I think that's what he or she is saying.

A final support behavior is advising (behavior finding). Chief 8 offers some evidence:

I focus on two things. I don't ever tell them what I think they already know. I make some assumptions for them, so I'm not the person always running up hey sir....I tend to focus on the real good stuff that I think he or she might have missed...I use indicators to try and figure that out. When you're sitting with a guy, in staff meetings twice a week and see what's all is on his plate and hear him talk and make comments, you kind of figure out real quick what I think he missed. I will say, I really don't think you thought that through and I'll just give him notes, based on I have derived from my eyes and ears.

These observations support a recommendation to consider providing the identified significant leadership behaviors and other support skills training for chiefs to become effective at performing as their commander's eyes and ears.

8. Run Interference – Most CMSgt participants in this study indicated they perform this behavior for their commander and supervisors. One unique observation regarding this behavior is that specific actions which define this behavior are widely varied among participants. As a result, transcription data presented three progressively more involved levels of this behavior:

- Chief 5 describes it simply as: "I've been asked to go to meetings for other commanders".
- Chief 8 believes describes it more as delegation when he says: "He'll give me a line. I want to get beyond this line. You know, if you can't handle it, come to me."
- Chief 9 believes it's filling the leadership behavior void of his superior when he states:

Now there are different skills – every leader brings different tools and skills to the table. Some commanders are more skilled than others. As a chief, you must sometimes do your best to overcome people that might be deficient in certain leadership skills... my job or task is to compliment my senior leader's leadership style.

Another observation is trying to ascertain the actual skills which enable a chief to successfully run interference for their superiors. Transcription data offers no direct evidence of support skills necessary to successfully perform this behavior. This behavior, like eyes and ears, could be

considered a higher-order leadership behavior because it requires the chief to have a few other significant behaviors found during this study as prerequisite capabilities.

One assumed run interference support skill is problem solver (behavior finding); the support skills necessary for this behavior was discussed earlier. Chief 10 indicates a requirement to assess and resolve issues:

It's just one of those things, "Hey, look. What do you think? I think maybe you can probably be more effective as the chief. I'll make an assessment of it. We'll discuss it. We'll bounce around my views. I'll look at all angles, and then I'll make a decision."

Another critical support behavior is effective oral and written communication skills. Oral and written communication skills were addressed under the discussion for advising behaviors and are taught extensively during all levels of Air Force EPME programs. Chief 14 shares his experience dealing with sensitive issues and communicating resolution options to his superiors:

I do know that people have asked about covering on certain sensitive issues within organizations that I've supervised. And so we sit down and we talk about it, and so we know we're going to have some broken glass, okay, so right now we don't have to worry about any damage control because the cat hasn't been let out of the bag or anything like that, so where do we go from here? What's the position? Is this the right position for the Air Force? If it's the right thing to do for this organization then this works and this unit, the squadron – if this is right, I have no problem saying this is what we need to do.

One other support skill is negotiation. This skill was mentioned during advising behaviors and seems plausible to support this behavior also because chiefs will often negotiate with others to resolve an issue. Once again, Chief 14 states during his experiences: "And so we sit down and we talk about it..."

A final thought concerns the purpose for chiefs performing this behavior verses other organizational members. Chief 10 best articulates this reason:

...chiefs are viewed as honest brokers, and reason for that is, I mean, what else – you have no agenda. There should be no agenda with you. Everything should be truthful, and there are officers that tell me there are two people that I would talk to and listen and believe.

That's an airman basic because he doesn't know no better...And a chief because he has no reason to lie.

These observations support a recommendation that chiefs are best utilized at running interference for issues containing limited organizational conflict levels, but which have the potential to escalate into a major conflict. Additionally, consider providing the identified significant leadership behaviors and other support skills training for chiefs to become effective at running interference for their commanders and supervisors.

Future Research Considerations

Although semi-structured interviews proved to be an effective means to gather data about the significant leadership behaviors of active duty CMSgts, some issues that future researchers should consider when conducting this type of study remain. These are detailed below:

1. Interview Guide – The interview guide was developed using two documents not originally designed for interview purposes, so other research sources were used to determine how to generate appropriate questions for the interview. Additionally, pilot study results did help to enhance the questions, but there was always a concern of asking a question in a non-leading manner; or put differently, in a way that did not lead the participant to believe they should perform the behavior just because the researcher mentioned its existence. Future researchers in this area should consider developing a more generic questionnaire which lists a variety of leadership behaviors, along with those mentioned in Dr. Yukl's survey, to see if these behaviors and others emerge as specific CMSgt leadership behaviors. Additionally, some altering of the guide should be done to motivate participants to provide more examples of CMSgt leadership behaviors performed only at Randolph Air Force Base (AFB) versus those accomplished at other AF installations. CMSgt and other enlisted personnel leadership

behaviors performed at other Air Force installations could be a subject for additional research studies.

2. CMSgt behaviors – During the interviews there was a continual challenge to have participants relate only significant behavior experiences that were specific to CMSgts. Although they were more than willing to share experiences, some were prone to relate stories of when they were advancing through the ranks rather than stick to only CMSgt behavior experiences. A consideration for future research is that significant CMSgt leadership behaviors found in this study may also apply to other lower ranking enlisted personnel, especially those at the senior master sergeant and master sergeant level. Another possible argument is that significant leadership behavior may be more related to occupation as opposed to rank of the individual. Why? In some cases, participants were required to perform notable leadership behaviors at a lower rank than other chiefs in different occupations.
3. Behavior may differ between CMSgts assigned to Major Command (MAJCOM) and those at the Base (installation) level. All CMSgts who participated in this study were assigned to Randolph AFB and MAJCOM and other higher headquarter positions; none were assigned to base level although most had earlier CMSgt experiences at base level. To improve this study, a few of the participants should have been selected from those assigned at base level. The researcher did solicit chiefs currently assigned to base level, but none accepted the invitation to participate in this study. Despite several follow up letters, telephone calls, and being approached by other chiefs, no base level assigned chiefs agreed to participate in this study.

4. Lack of female CMSgt participation. Of the 10 CMSgt participants, only one chief was female. Several attempts were made to solicit more female chief involvement, but with no success.
5. Wartime (deployed) vs. Peacetime (not deployed) significant leadership behaviors. The researcher did not differentiate leadership behaviors by whether they were performed during war or peacetime situations, although some participants made the distinction at times when responding to interview questions. Widening the research focus to intentionally collect this information may have literally doubled the amount of collected data. This remains an intriguing opportunity for further study.
6. Determination of significant behaviors by race. Of the participants interviewed, four were non Anglo American. Although this research resulted in no recognizable differentiation of significant CMSgt leadership behaviors by race, future studies may look into this area.

CMSgt Leadership Development Final Remarks

The information above indicates that AF CMSgt leadership development already has roots within adult education learning theory. Examples include initial technical school, on-the-job training, EPME participation, civilian education and training interventions, and associated work experiences. The transcription data collected for this study is full of instances where CMSgt participants described adult learning methods such as *self-directed, distance and workplace learning, along with experiential learning (situated cognition) and program planning*. Future studies in this area should use these learning theories to guide more enlisted leadership behavior exploration and specific skill acquisition.

One final thought concerns recent enlisted leadership development efforts. As stated in chapter 2, the Army's AZIMUTH Leadership Check and Baseline Officer Longitudinal Data Set (BOLDS)

leadership research offered the most promising initiatives in this area. But despite these efforts, a recent query in December 2008 resulted in no current research efforts in this area. In the military's defense, their resources are tied up in war, and some military branches are experiencing personnel shortages that are too great to allow them to forge ahead with any new enlisted leadership development efforts.

Summary

In summary, this chapter provided some final observations, recommendations, and concluding remarks concerning significant leadership behaviors of active duty CMSgts working on Randolph AFB, Texas. This was done using the three original research questions as a framework for discussion. Although the major purpose of this study was to explore participants' experiences to find significant behaviors, data was also collected to determine skills which may contribute to these behaviors and what education and training interventions facilitate their acquisition. Finally, comments were provided to offer a way ahead for future leadership studies concerning Air Force CMSgt and other military enlisted populations.

Appendix A--Participant Cover Letter

Dear Participant,

Thank you for your voluntary participation as an interviewee during this research study. Per our telephone conversation, I will be contacting you by telephone to set a TIME, DATE, and LOCATION to meet with you for the interview portion of the study. As previously mentioned, I am allotting about one hour to conduct this interview. If more time is needed we can decide at that time to continue or schedule another time to complete the interview. I will be digitally-recording our conversation and taking notes as well. This will enhance my ability to accurately record your information. The information you provide will be part of the general findings portion of my study. If you find that any of these arrangements are not satisfactory, or you decide not to participate in this study, please contact me as soon as possible.

I have enclosed several forms for you to review and/or complete prior to the interview. The first form is an overview of the research study to help you think about the issue(s) we will be discussing. The second is a demographic information sheet to provide some basic information and allow me to report on the characteristics of the individuals participating in the study. If you do not feel comfortable providing this information please leave those line(s) blank. If needed, please contact me prior to the interview for clarification of the requested information.

The third form is the Informed Consent--Protection of Human Rights Release Form. This form is required by Kansas State University to ensure you, as a subject in this study, completely understand your rights regarding participation. These include:

1. Purpose of the study.
2. Researcher motives.
3. Privacy protection.
4. Confidentiality of interview tapes, notes, and transcripts.
5. Right not to participate at any point in the study prior to defense of the dissertation (oral research report).

I will review this information with you in person before the interview. We will then sign the form and I will give you a copy for your records.

Finally, spend some time prior to our interview thinking about your military career, specifically your work and other experiences as a CMSgt. What leadership behaviors are significant to your success at this level? Think about jobs performed, personnel interactions, workplace location(s), situational factors, education, training, etc... as a CMSgt. Be prepared to talk in-depth about any experience(s) during your military career you feel were significant to your successful performance at the CMSgt level. I look forward to seeing you soon.

//signed//

Paul Machen

217 Long Cove Drive

Cibolo, Texas

(210) 437-1962 (Hm) / (210) 264-3875 (Cell)

chiefmachen@satx.rr.com

Appendix B

Study Information & General Discussion Areas

The purpose of this study is to determine significant leadership behaviors of active duty Air Force (AF) Chief Master Sergeants (CMSgt). As you are aware, CMSgts perform as superintendents, managers, and provide senior enlisted leadership at all AF organizational levels. Despite this, AF leadership literature and associated research studies are primarily focused on officers with very little addressing enlisted leadership behaviors. Additionally, recent studies have been accomplished, providing a research basis for officer leadership, while no such support exists for enlisted leadership development.

The primary research questions guiding this study are:

1. What sources can be used to ascertain active duty Air Force CMSgt leadership behaviors?
2. Is there a common set of these behaviors?
3. If there are such behaviors, which adult learning methods facilitate their acquisition?

This research will study active duty Air Force CMSgts, working on Randolph Air Force Base, Texas. The interviews will be conducted by me at a mutually agreed upon date, time, and, place. A one hour block of time is needed for the interview, which will be tape recorded with your permission. Once the tapes have been transcribed and an initial analysis performed, I will send you a copy of your transcript and my initial analysis for your review. At that time, you may add additional thoughts and comments, correct errors and misinterpretations on my part, and ensure that the intent of your comments was accurately captured during the interview. It may also be necessary to follow up with you during the final data analysis when I am comparing all the interviews.

Your interview tapes and transcripts will be kept confidential. I will be the only person who knows your identity. A pseudonym will be used to identify you during the interview and on the transcripts. Only the professional transcriptionist, a secondary reviewer, and I will listen to the audiotapes and see the transcriptions.

There will be no remuneration for your participation in this research. If you choose to participate, please know you have the right to withdraw from the study at any time prior to the oral defense of my dissertation.

Appendix C

Sample Participant Demographic Form

Participant name:

Contact information (follow-up purposes):

Address (include city/state/zip code):

Primary telephone:

Secondary telephone:

Demographic questions:

1. What is your current unit of assignment?
2. What is your Air Force Specialty Code?
3. What is your educational background? Include any degrees or certifications you possess.
4. What is your gender?
5. What is your race/ethnicity?
6. How many years have you been in the Air Force?
7. What is your current duty title/provide brief description of your primary duties and responsibilities?
8. What other primary positions/duties/responsibilities have you performed as a CMSgt?
9. Have you deployed (wartime or other purpose) as a CMSgt? If so, briefly describe positions/duties/responsibilities you performed at this level?
10. What technical or professional developmental training have you received, i.e. Center for Creative Leadership, etc?
11. Approximate age (please circle one): 20-29 30-39 40-49 50-59 60-69

Preferred Pseudonym: This will be used to maintain your anonymity in the written dissertation. (If you do not select an alias, I will select one for you.)

Appendix D

Kansas State University Informed Consent Form

PROJECT TITLE: Determining Significant Leadership Behaviors of Active Duty Air Force Chief Master Sergeants Working on Randolph Air Force Base (AFB), Texas.: A Phenomenological Inquiry.

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: W. Franklin Spikes, Ed.D.

CO-INVESTIGATOR: Paul A. Machen II

CONTACT INFORMATION FOR ANY PROBLEMS/QUESTIONS:

Primary: W. Franklin Spikes, Ed.D.
Professor and Director, Doctoral Program in Adult and Continuing Education
351 Bluemont Hall
1100 Mid-Campus Drive
Manhattan, KS 66506-5305
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Alternate: Paul A. Machen II
217 Long Cove Drive
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IRB CHAIR CONTACT/PHONE INFORMATION:

Rick Scheidt, Chair, Committee on Research Involving Human Subject, 1 Fairchild Hall, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS 66506, (785) 532-3224

OR

Jerry Jaax, Associate Vice Provost for Research Compliance and University Veterinarian, 1 Fairchild Hall, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS 66506, (785) 532-3224

SPONSOR OF PROJECT: College of Education

PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH: To discover significant active duty CMSgt leadership behaviors and determine education, training, experience, and other interventions to facilitate further leadership behavior development. This research will also partially fulfill the researcher's doctoral degree requirements through Kansas State University. The final product will be given to the U.S. Air Force to assist in their enlisted leadership development programs.

PROCEDURES OR METHODS TO BE USED: A phenomenological inquiry design will be used to identify significant active duty CMSgts leadership behaviors. The population was selected because of the researcher’s access and experiences of being part of this group. Criterion, snowball, and convenience purposeful sampling techniques will be used to identify CMSgts to participate in the study. Potential participants will be contacted by the researcher. Data will be collected using semi-structured interviews and an interview guide until thematic saturation or 10-20 participants have been interviewed. Interviews will be tape recorded with permission of the subject. A professional transcriptionist will transcribe the tapes. Each participant will be asked to review their interview transcript to ensure the transcription is accurate, and the researcher correctly interpreted the intended perspective of the participant. Each transcript will be compared to all others during the transcript analysis; constant comparison method.

LENGTH OF STUDY: About two hours for each interview, one hour per transcript review. Additional time may be required for follow-up questions conducted either in person, telephone, or e-mail during final data analysis.

RISK ANTICIPATED: None.

EXTENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY: Confidentiality of participant data collected will be maintained throughout the duration of the study. The researcher will conduct the interview in a private location. Participants will be asked to select a pseudonym to be used in labeling data collected, transcripts, and final version of the dissertation. Only the professional transcriptionist, third party reviewer, and researcher will hear the interview tapes or see the transcripts. There is the potential that this research will be submitted for publication following the successful defense of the dissertation. In this case, the identity of the participants will continue to remain confidential.

TERMS OF PARTICIPATION: I understand this project is research, and that my participation is completely voluntary. I also understand that if I decide to participate in this study, I may withdraw my consent at any time, and stop participating at any time without explanation or penalty.

I verify that my signature below indicates that I have read and understand this consent form, and willingly agree to participate in this study under the terms described, and that my signature acknowledges that I have received a signed and dated copy of this consent form.

Participant Name: _____

Date: _____

Participant Signature: _____

Date: _____

Witness to Signature: _____

Appendix E

Copy of Air Force Survey Approval Letter

MEMORANDUM FOR CMSGT PAUL A. MACHEN II

FROM: AFMA/MAPP

550 E Street East, Suite 116
Randolph AFB TX 78150-4451

SUBJECT: Request for Survey Approval

We have reviewed the CMSGT Leadership Behavior Survey and approved its use for Air Force Chief Master Sergeants. We have assigned a Survey Control Number (SCN) of USAF SCN 05-061. This SCN is valid until 14 Nov 2007. Please ensure that the SCN and expiration date appear within the survey, survey instructions or appropriate web site.

With regard to the survey and its associated results, it is important to draw your attention to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). Under the FOIA, the public can request the results of your survey. Furthermore, if the results will be released outside the Air Force, please follow proper approval procedures through Public Affairs before the results are released.

Questions or concerns can be directed to me at DSN 487-4773. We wish you much success with your data collection effort.

//Signed//

BRENDA GAINEY
Air Force Survey Program

Appendix F

Semi-Structured Interview Guide

Active Duty Air Force CMSGT Significant Leadership Behaviors

(based on Gary Yukl's Managerial Practice Survey and AFI 36-2618, Enlisted Force Structure)

Each interview will begin with an explanation of the research study, and clarification of the purpose, and intended use of findings. Since the interviews are semi-structured, exact wording and order of questions may be different for each interview. Additional questions may be asked to probe areas that emerge or to clarify issues as required. **Be sure to ask participants to provide specific examples for each of the questions / areas below. Also, what other aspects of each area they would like to discuss. Dr. Yukl's questions are in blue. Researcher developed questions are left in black.**

1. **Informing:** As a CMSgt, do you
 - A. Disseminate relevant information about decisions, plans, and activities to people that need it to do their work?
 - B. Answer requests for technical information?
 - C. During what situation(s) and experience(s) did you acquire these behaviors?
 - D. Do you believe those situation (s) and experiences were the most effective ways to acquire these behaviors? If not, indicate what would be the most effective learning methods / situations / experiences to acquire these behaviors.

2. **Consulting and Delegating:** As a CMSgt, do you:
 - A. Check with people before making changes that affect them?
 - B. Encourage suggestions for improvements?
 - C. Invite participation in decision making?
 - D. Incorporate the ideas and suggestions of others in decisions?
 - E. Allow others to have responsibility in carrying out work activities and making decisions?
 - F. During what situation(s) and experience(s) did you acquire these behaviors?
 - G. Do you believe those situation (s) and experiences were the most effective ways to acquire these behaviors? If not, indicate what would be the most effective learning methods / situations / experiences to acquire these behaviors.

3. Planning and Organizing: As a CMSgt, do you:

- A. Determine long-term objectives and strategies for adapting to work-related environmental change?
- B. Determine how to use personnel and allocate resources to accomplish objectives?
- C. Determine how to improve the efficiency of operations?
- D. Determine how to achieve coordination with other parts of the organization?
- E. During what situation(s) and experience(s) did you acquire these behaviors?
- F. Do you believe those situation (s) and experiences were the most effective ways to acquire these behaviors? If not, indicate what would be the most effective learning methods / situations / experiences to acquire these behaviors.

4. Problem Solving: As a CMSgt, do you:

- A. Identify work-related problems and analyze them to identify solutions?
- B. Implement solutions and resolve important problems or crises?
- C. During what situation(s) and experience(s) did you acquire these behaviors?
- D. Do you believe those situation (s) and experiences were the most effective ways to acquire these behaviors? If not, indicate what would be the most effective learning methods / situations / experiences to acquire these behaviors.

5. Clarifying Roles and Objectives: As a CMSgt, do you:

- A. Assign tasks, providing direction in how to do the work, and communicate a clear understanding of job responsibilities, task objectives, deadlines, and performance expectations?
- B. During what situation(s) and experience(s) did you acquire these behaviors?
- C. Do you believe those situation (s) and experiences were the most effective ways to acquire these behaviors? If not, indicate what would be the most effective learning methods / situations / experiences to acquire these behaviors.

6. Monitoring Operations and Environment: As a CMSgt, do you:

- A. Gather information about work activities and check on the progress and quality of the work?

- B. Evaluate the performance of individuals and the organizational unit?
- C. Scan the work environment to detect threats and opportunities?
- D. During what situation(s) and experience(s) did you acquire these behaviors?
- E. Do you believe those situation (s) and experiences were the most effective ways to acquire these behaviors? If not, indicate what would be the most effective learning methods / situations / experiences to acquire these behaviors.

7. Motivating: As a CMSgt, do you:

- A. Use influence techniques that appeal to emotion, values, or logic to generate enthusiasm for the work?
- B. Set an example of proper behavior?
- C. During what situation(s) and experience(s) did you acquire these behaviors?
- D. Do you believe those situation (s) and experiences were the most effective ways to acquire these behaviors? If not, indicate what would be the most effective learning methods / situations / experiences to acquire these behaviors.

8. Recognizing and Rewarding: As a CMSgt, do you:

- A. Provide praise, recognition, and rewards for effective performance, significant achievements, and special contributions? [Ask about informal examples as well]
- B. During what situation(s) and experience(s) did you acquire these behaviors?
- C. Do you believe those situation (s) and experiences were the most effective ways to acquire these behaviors? If not, indicate what would be the most effective learning methods / situations / experiences to acquire these behaviors.

9. Supporting and Mentoring: As a CMSgt, do you:

- A. Act in a friendly and considerate manner, be patient and helpful, and show sympathy and support?
- B. Do things to facilitate the skill development and career enhancement of others?
- C. During what situation(s) and experience(s) did you acquire these behaviors?
- D. Do you believe those situation (s) and experiences were the most effective ways to acquire these behaviors? If not, indicate what would be the most effective learning methods / situations / experiences to acquire these behaviors.

10. Managing Conflict and Team Building: As a CMSgt, do you:

- A. Encourage and facilitate the constructive resolution of conflict?
- B. Encourage cooperation, teamwork, and identification within the organizational unit?
- C. During what situation(s) and experience(s) did you acquire these behaviors?
- D. Do you believe those situation (s) and experiences were the most effective ways to acquire these behaviors? If not, indicate what would be the most effective learning methods / situations / experiences to acquire these behaviors.

11. Network: As a CMSgt, do you:

- A. Socialize informally, and develop contacts with people who are a source of information and support?
- B. Maintain contacts through periodic interaction, including telephone calls, correspondence, and attendance at meetings and social events?
- C. Tell people about the organizational unit to promote its reputation?
- D. During what situation(s) and experience(s) did you acquire these behaviors?
- E. Do you believe those situation (s) and experiences were the most effective ways to acquire these behaviors? If not, indicate what would be the most effective learning methods / situations / experiences to acquire these behaviors.

12. Vision: As a CMSgt, do you:

- A. Create, implement, or communicate your organizational vision?
- B. During what situation(s) and experience(s) did you acquire these behaviors?
- C. Do you believe those situation (s) and experiences were the most effective ways to acquire these behaviors? If not, indicate what would be the most effective learning methods / situations / experiences to acquire these behaviors.

13. Additional questions based on emerging themes:

- A. Has your supervisor ever asked you to be his/her eyes and ears? If so, please explain what this means to you?
 - What specific behaviors are involved during this activity (**identify each behavior and learning intervention(s)**)?

- Do you believe those situation (s) and experiences were the most effective ways to acquire these behaviors? If not, indicate what would be the most effective learning methods / situations / experiences to acquire these behaviors.

B. Has your supervisor ever asked you to run interference for her/him? If so, please explain what this means to you?

- What specific behaviors are involved during this activity (**identify each behavior and learning intervention(s)**)?
- Do you believe those situation (s) and experiences were the most effective ways to acquire these behaviors? If not, indicate what would be the most effective learning methods / situations / experiences to acquire these behaviors.

C. What other leadership behaviors would enhance your effectiveness as a CMSgt (**identify each behavior and recommended learning intervention(s)**)?

Appendix G

Secondary Rater Information

Secondary Rater:

Ms Kimberley Rolf
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