



HEADQUARTERS THREE BRIGADE

Lavarack Barracks, Air Burnu Street, TOWNSVILLE QLD 4813, AUSTRALIA

Q6654646

THE MAJOR AND SERGEANT MAJOR LEADERSHIP TEAM – PART II

Distribution:

All Majors in 3rd Brigade

All Sergeant Majors in 3rd Brigade

Reference:

- A. Headquarters 3rd Brigade, The Major and Sergeant Major Leadership Team, HQ3BDE / OUT / 2015 / Q6342184, dated 27 Jan 2016
- B. Commander and Regimental Sergeant Major 3rd Brigade, Leadership Discussion with 3rd Brigade Majors and Sergeant Majors, Daly Officers Mess, 18 Mar 2016

1. References A and B created discussion on defining expectations for our Major and Sergeant Major leadership teams as sub-unit command teams, specialists, trainers, educators, enablers and staff.

Next Steps:

2. *The Major and Sergeant Major Leadership Team – Part II*, focuses reference A and B discussions and describes next steps in our development as Major and Sergeant Major leadership teams.
3. Task: Read, discuss and critique *The Major and Sergeant Major Leadership Team – Part II*. These activities may occur with the people within your sub-units and workplaces, with your peers, with people outside your workplace or outside Army or Defence. You may undertake activities with your commanding officers and regimental sergeant majors.
4. Then on 13 May 2016, 1430 h-1530 h meet the Brigade Regimental Sergeant Major and Brigade Commander to articulate your views on *The Major and Sergeant Major Leadership Team – Part II*. On this date, requirements are that discussions are open, inclusive, free-flowing and educational. We are all learning.

Read, discuss and critique:

5. Key areas for reading, discussion and critique from references A and B, include:
 - a. Pivot point: The Major and Sergeant Major leadership teams are the pivot point in the tactical land force. The Major sets the example. The Sergeant Major maintains and enforces the Major's example. The Major and Sergeant Major leadership team work hard to quickly establish a harmonious working relationship.

Read, discuss and critique: Do you agree? What other Major and Sergeant Major interactions create a strong team? What can we do when this relationship experiences chance, friction and uncertainty?

- b. Lead as professionals: Carl von Clausewitz stated, ‘every war is rich in unique episodes. Each is an uncharted sea, full of reefs’.¹ Professional military service remains unique. The Australian Army is a professional ‘entity that threatens and when necessary applies violence to achieve national objectives’.² Through your service as military professionals, the Australian nation ‘must trust the standing army to respect the law of the land and be capable of restraint and prudence in the use of appropriate and sanctioned violence’.³

Eliot Cohen, the Australian Army’s inaugural E.G. Keogh Chair in Land Warfare Studies, argues that although the military is a profession, in four respects ‘it does not, in fact, resemble [professions such as] medicine, [engineering] or the law’.⁴

Unlike medicine, engineering or law, the military profession requires:

- (1) One employer: The military profession binds itself to only one employer, the government, and it has only one fundamental structure – the large service branch.
- (2) Ambiguous purpose: All professional activities present difficulties of moral choice and ultimate purpose for those who practice them. The ultimate purpose of a doctor is to cure patients of their diseases or at least alleviate the pain they suffer. An engineer’s purpose is construction to relevant specified standards. A lawyer aims to achieve the best possible result for their clients.

In contrast a military professional’s ultimate purpose is ‘altogether hazier’. This purpose is ‘the achievement of political ends designated by [government]’ ... ‘but because political objectives are just that – political – they are often ambiguous, contradictory and uncertain’.⁵

- (3) Adaptation: Medical, engineering and legal professionals generally require common technical expertise, across time, nationality and place. In contrast military professionals must constantly adapt their ‘conception of professionalism to the war before them’.⁶ For the Australian Army, requirements to fight have changed markedly in the last century. Each war, with diverse expeditionary environments, changing and adaptive enemies seeking advantage against our military capabilities, demands different conceptions of professionalism, equipment, force structure and leadership.
- (4) Applying violence: As noted earlier, the application of violence is the essence of the military profession. According to Eliot Cohen, this requirement poses a dilemma for military professionals. Cohen notes that ‘lawyers continually appear in court or draw up legal instruments...doctors routinely operate or prescribe medication...[and] engineers build bridges or computers...[but] soldiers very rarely manage violence, or at least not large scale violence’.⁷ Even military professionals who do apply violence in war... ‘do so for a very small portion of their careers, and rarely occupy the same position in more than one conflict’.⁸
- (5) Read, discuss and critique: How do we as Major and Sergeant Major leadership teams best learn, understand, practice, test, develop, review and renew skills in our military profession? How do we develop as professionals so that we respect

our privilege of commanding, educating, training and enabling our Australian soldiers and other people who need our leadership?

- c. Technical skills and soft-skills. Demographer Bernard Salt writes ‘the way to future-proof the demand for your work output is to ensure that [by approximately the age of 25 to 30] you have the right technical skills’.⁹ Most Army officers and non-commissioned officers through experience, study, education and training meet this requirement. Salt’s message is build the foundations of your technical skills from your teens into your twenties.

After the age of 25 to 30, ‘the workforce of the future requires ‘soft-skills’ like the ability to fit in seamlessly, to relocate, and to adapt to different circumstances. Soft-skills include the ability to walk up to a group and to self-confidently introduce yourself and to ask questions’.¹⁰

To Bernard Salt’s advice on soft-skills we might include living your organisation’s values, such as: courage, initiative, respect, and teamwork. Listen. Live with humility, know issues that cause you to feel and act upon strong emotions, and maintain realistic expectations of yourself and others. Do not have emotional outbursts. Raise your voice only when life is in danger.

Read, discuss and critique: Do you agree? Are we appropriately developing technical skills and soft-skills in our people? Where can we improve?

- d. Tenure - limitations and opportunities. Our Majors and Sergeant Majors are concerned with their lack of opportunity to form a command team. Perceptions are that approximately 15 years of service culminates in sub-unit command appointments, yet Army places people in these appointments for a mere 12-months.

There is a view that Majors should serve two years as sub-unit commanders followed by a one-year unit operations officer appointment. A counter view is that a three-year appointment for Majors in battalions and regiments prevents opportunities for other talented people.

Another view is that Sergeant Major’s appointment should be the culmination of a Warrant Officer Class 2’s time in rank; the final appointment before consideration, and potentially promotion, to Warrant Officer Class 1. This approach enables our Warrant Officers to attain necessary skills, knowledge and attributes for the Sergeant Major role.

Therefore, instead of a time based approach to sub-unit command we need a productivity based approach.

How might Majors and Sergeant Majors enhance their productivity at work as leaders of a sub-unit:¹¹ How we enhance productivity without exhausting our sub-units which experience a new Major and Sergeant Major each year?

- (1) Technology: Write task orders in preference to instructions; take sub-unit leaders off the Lavarack Barracks routine Base email lists; no email between commanding officers and sub-unit command teams - face-to-face or voice only; limit email replies to one per minute; do not answer the phone unless it’s

a true emergency – don't answer blocked numbers or unknown numbers (important callers will leave a message); use keyboard shortcuts; no personal social media at work; and, revise weekly your list detailing your personal goals for the next 12 months and beyond.

- (2) Clothes: Regularly inspect your troops' equipment for excess weight carriage; inspect dress and bearing; return surplus equipment issued to the Q-Store - these items take up room in your workplace / home and are expensive to move when you post; maintain equipment in peak condition - replace worn boots and torn uniforms; and, keep deployable equipment continuously packed and ready.
- (3) Life Hacks (techniques adopted in order to manage one's time and daily activities in a more efficient way): Read, discuss, practice and test the boundaries of mission command; visualise, share and discuss your objectives and end state; start activities before you feel ready; when in doubt, assume you are right – decisive is productive so is a bias for action; if you have a mind block, form your team and create a mind map; if you can't write it down record it – voice or visual; and, when you read something helpful, write to the author.

Maintain a *commonplace book* which is a central resource or depository for ideas, quotes, anecdotes, observations and information you come across during your life. The commonplace book records and organises these ideas for later use in your life, in your business, in your writing, speaking or whatever it is that you do. Maintain records when dealing with sensitive or complex issues and circumstances.

- (4) Body: Manage stress through daily exercise; sleep more – you will get more done; and, take naps when your energy is running low. Know your limits and know when you need to exceed them. Live by Colonel Sir Edward 'Weary' Dunlop's conviction that it's 'only when you are put at full stretch that you can realise your full potential'.¹²
- (5) Schedule: Do easiest things first; prioritise one item per day; set a daily routine; no meetings unless they are decisive; and, better done than perfect.
- (6) Food: Develop a routine with your diet; eat healthy food; get food delivered to save time; and, negotiate a daily deal with your trusted café.
- (7) Mind: Maintain personal and team resilience - believe in what you do and why you do it, maintain realistic expectations of yourself and others, aim for post traumatic growth; determine which 20% of work produces 80% of results; focus on the important – suppress the urgent; decide the outcome before even starting; eliminate trivial decisions, such as what to wear; learn to ignore – no need to respond to everything; do a bad first draft – you can't edit a blank page; and, treat time as your money.

Read, discuss and critique: Do you have other ideas that can enhance the productivity of the Major and Sergeant Major leadership team? What policy changes are required to enhance your productivity so that 12-months in sub-unit command means you and Army gain appropriate value from the opportunity? What are the policy impediments to effective training? How can

we streamline governance requirements? How do we accelerate productivity from people who do command sub-units for 24-months, or more?

- e. Mentors. At reference B we discussed mentors. The vast majority of our Majors and Sergeant Majors in 3rd Brigade make no use of mentors. Amy Gallo, contributing editor at Harvard Business Review, wrote *Demystifying Mentoring*.¹³ Gallo noted ‘when people think of mentoring, they often think of an older executive counselling a young upstart. The senior leader advises the junior employee on their career, how to navigate the world of work, and what they need to do to get ahead’.

But mentoring has changed in the last few decades. Below are four mentoring myths:

(1) Myth #1: You have to find one perfect mentor.

Many people have several advisors to whom they turn. Kathy E. Kram, the Shipley Professor in Management at the Boston University School of Management prefers the term ‘developmental network’ to mentor. ‘It’s that handful of people who you can go to for advice and who you trust to have your best interests in mind’, she explains. This network can be as large or small as you want, and it may even include your spouse or partner, your colleagues, former bosses or people outside Defence.

Remember, you can also reach out and mentor others.

(2) Myth #2: Mentoring is a formal long-term relationship.

Because the world moves fast and people change jobs and careers more often, a long-term advising relationship may be unrealistic and unnecessary. ‘Mentoring can be a one-hour mentoring session. We don’t have to escalate it to a six-month or year-long event’, says Karie Willyerd former Chief Learning Officer of Sun Microsystems and co-founder of Future Workplace.

Instead of focusing on the long term, think of mentoring as something you access when you need it. Willyerd suggests you may want to avoid using the word ‘mentor’ altogether. You can simply say, ‘I’d really like to get your advice on something’.

(3) Myth #3: Mentoring is for junior people.

‘We understand that people at every stage benefit from this kind of assistance’, says Kathy Kram. For example, ‘reverse mentoring’ in which a more junior person advises a senior person on things like new technology.

Transitions are a particularly good time to seek out a mentor. Whether you are making a career change, taking on a new role, trying to navigate the complexities of your organisation, or contemplating leaving a job, advice from someone who has done it before can be helpful.

(4) Myth #4: Mentoring is something more experienced people do out of the goodness of their hearts.

Mentoring should be useful to both parties involved. Before seeking out a mentor, think about what you have to offer them. Can you provide a unique perspective on

the organisation or their role? Do you bring valuable outside information that might help bring success in their job? Whatever it is, be sure that you are clear with your prospective advisor about what's in it for them. This does not have to be a direct trade. Even the promise of future help, if and when it's needed, can be enough to convince a mentor to give up their time and energy.¹⁴

Conclusion

6. The Major and Sergeant Major leadership team is an influential body within the Australian Army. These are some ideas for your teams to read, discuss and critique. We look forward to examining these ideas with you in a manner that is open, inclusive, free-flowing and educational. We are all learning.



CA Field, CSC
BRIG
COMD 3 BDE

Tel: (07) 4771 7128

Email: christopher.field@defence.gov.au

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DR Lehr, OAM
WO1
RSM 3 BDE

Tel: (07) 4771 7336

Email: david.lehr@defence.gov.au

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¹ Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, Michael Howard and Peter Paret, eds. and trans., Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1982, p. 120

² Commonwealth of Australia, *Land Warfare Doctrine 1, The Fundamentals of Land Power*, Canberra, 2014, p. 23

³ *Ibid*, p. 51

⁴ Eliot A. Cohen, *Supreme Command, Soldiers, Statesmen, and Leadership in Wartime*, Free Press, New York, 2002, p. 241

⁵ *Ibid*

⁶ *Ibid*, p. 243

⁷ *Ibid*, p. 245

⁸ *Ibid*, p. 246

⁹ Bernard Salt, *Technocrats, knowledge workers, soft skills to dominate future work*, The Australian, 05 November 2014

¹⁰ *Ibid*

¹¹ Ideas based on Anna Vital's *How to Be Productive*, Mind Map, 16 October 2013 <<http://anna.vc/post/64187007171/how-to-be-productive>> [accessed 20 March 2016]

¹² Sir Edward 'Weary' Dunlop Medical Research Foundation, *Sir Edward Dunlop, Biography*, Heidelberg West, Victoria, 2015 <<http://www.siredwarddunlop.org.au/index.php/historical/biography-part-two>> [accessed 05 April 2016]

¹³ Amy Gallo, *Demystifying Mentoring*, Harvard Business Review, 01 February 2001 <<https://hbr.org/2011/02/demystifying-mentoring/>> [accessed 29 March 2016]

¹⁴ *Ibid*