A Journey to Better the Character of Army's Leaders

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Abstract

"Character is like a tree and reputation like a shadow. The shadow is what we think of it; the tree is the real thing" - Abraham Lincoln.

In a fully digitised battlefield in which advanced weaponry gives the individual soldier killing power previously unseen in war, the concept of character is often a second thought. Though within a connected battlefield, the character of the individual is more often than not the most defining factor for mission success. This statement may seem at odds with the traditional approach to warfare. War is won by strategy and tactics, but it demands the soldiers and leaders executing these actions to act and react in scalable and dangerous environments. The ability to thrive in these environments is down to the individual and is guided by many things. Though ultimately, the decision made within these environments stem from the individual's character. This human factor is the simplest to ascertain yet the hardest to understand and develop.

This research project will delve into the aspects of character in relation to Army leadership. It will attempt to find a methodology for implementation which will increase the character of those that lead. Through searching for a definition of character, exploring methods for measuring it, and then hypothesising a methodology to develop it; it is aimed that this research will be the foundation for ongoing study and development within this field.

This project does not suggest that the current character of the Australian Army is completely corrupt. The area being addressed is not an absence of character within the organisation. Instead, it is aimed at developing a deeper understanding of character and combining this with the current methodology for developing individual character within the Army. Through this process, efficiencies and better practices can be determined to amplify the current methodology and increase the character of those within the Army through a proposed

Character Development Tool. This project accept that Army currently embraces character as a defining factor for mission success, and it aims to enhance the methodology.

This research project is not to argue the importance of good character within the Army. This fact is well known. Rather, it seeks to further understand the concept of character as it relates to Army as a unique organisation. It then aims to discover ways to better the character of the individuals within - and in turn – better the organisational character of Army's leadership.

Keywords: Army, character, leadership, development, measurement

A journey to better the character of our leaders.

The irony of delving into a research project on character and the development of it within the Army is very apparent. In an organisation that is seemingly infamous for the diminishment of individualism, reliant on conformance, and strives for the sacrifice of self for the greater good; the quest to understand and develop individual character seems folly. In an era of modern combat, one could ponder on the requirement or desire to develop the character of individuals within the Army rather than focusing on the hampering of individualism and progression of conformity. Though the argument to this relates to the evolution of combat and warfare through the last century. Though the fundamentals of warfare remain unchanged, the methods certainly have. Technology is perhaps the most influential and documented change in the methodology of conflict resulting in increased lethality, disaggregation of the battlefield into urban and complex terrain and the threat of asymmetric effects upon a civilian population previously unseen to current levels in our deep history as a species. Technological advancements have pushed determining factors in warfare down to the lowest level. This is the way in which warfare has evolved - and as such - those that are the executers of modern warfare must also evolve. This evolution is more than the learning of new tactics, or the use of new technologies – it is an evolution that prepares the modern soldiers and leaders for modern combat both physically and mentally.

The mental preparation for combat is one area that is not heavily focused upon in the contemporary Army. There is emersion training, scenario training – but the inner factors of the individual that drives each and every soldier inclusive of their decisions is not often addressed. Individual character and the evolution of this training and development is not progressing along the same speed that technology within the battlefield is.

Character is not the first thing that is thought of when considering how to increase combat effectiveness, nor is it something that is covered in great detail within the various basic training schools within the contemporary Army. Character is that thing which individuals associate to others through their own definition of the concept. An agreeance on character within the Army outside of generalised statements on performance in battle and dedication to duty does not exist. Though arguably in the modern era of combat, character could find itself being the defining factor in the win or loss of future conflicts. One only has to look as such case studies as the My Lai Massacre of the Vietnam war for a practical example. Individual actions which through contemporary media coverage had strategic effects on the American position in Vietnam. The individual character which led to this massacre was a defining factor for an entire nation and its strategic and military commitments for the remainder of that conflict and for decades to come. This is but one example of how individual character can sway a war regardless of technology advancements or numerical superiority on the battlefield.

The aim of this research project is explore avenues for the advancement of character development within the Army to meet the evolution of warfare akin to technology advancements discussed. The aim is to not revolutionise character development within the Army, but to review it and simply enhance a system which is rooted in history and experience with academic research and contemporary approaches to similar concepts.

Method of research

This project will aim to define the concept of character as it is practiced and required in the Army leadership environment. The criterion for this is not for wide academic acceptance (which is a practical impossibility), but rather for adoption and applied usefulness and robustness within the Army. Using this definition, analysis will be conducted on the concept

of applying a metric to individual character for the purpose of measuring it and quantifying it. If it is possible within the context of Army to define and measure character, then this paper will propose a modern and pragmatic approach for the development of character within Army leadership. It is expected that through the research and analysis of academic literature related to character from the last century, combined with recent Army doctrine and an understanding of what Army leadership needs for contemporary combat – a robust compromise can be struck which is a pathway for character development turned into Army needs and refined for Army requirements. This pathway is the purposed Character Development Tool, for which this project is the foundation and stepping stone towards its development.

A Definition of Character

The research literature into 'character' is a twisted mess of convoluted information from which an agreed definition or concept is non-existent. One only needs to search for character definitions on the internet. This search will yield a multitude of definitions and concepts which span from a literary perspective, to an academic one, to personal vignettes, to famous quotes from history. Unlike defining something tangible – character is a concept which is intangible across multiple fields. The reason for this discord lies in the concept of character itself. Character is not but one thing nor is it everything about a person. Though arguably; it is the most important thing. Character is easily recognisable in a person, though to define it is difficult. It is one of the most confusing components of a human yet it is one that is relied upon to function as a part of society and even more so, within the work place. As it relates to service within the Army, its importance is compounded. It relates to not only the person's ability to function within the Army, but to represent the government with the ability to take life - or to have your life taken at any moment.

As such; character is universally difficult to define - but it is universally agreed that it is important. Thus, to universally define character is not the primary aim of this research project. As flagged by Conger and Hollenback in their work on the same topic – a universal definition of character is not important (2010). They highlight the simple concept that *a diversity of frameworks and ideas open the field to a broader set of investigations and models* (p311). Inspired by this concept, it is through this diversity in which the concept of character will be cross sectioned and analysed in an attempt to refine a definition of character for service within the Army. The aim is to not explore for a universal definition of character, but rather, use a breadth of definitions and derive a commonality that has relevance to the Army. Service in the Army is unique and as such, the concept of character for which the Army seeks its members to possess must also be unique.

The Australian Army (2005) currently defines character as follows:

For the purposes of Army, character training and development, is described as, those inner qualities of a person that are evident in behaviour that is positive and constructive in the development of self, relationships and community (p17).

The above definition will be the baseline for further investigation into the concepts and definitions of character. This Army doctrine states upfront that a definition is difficult to refine; and they offer the above definition by way of a start-point for ongoing educational purposes. By way of a start-point, it has strong foundations. The Army definition is unique and seemingly relevant for the purpose of Army service. It offers both a purpose – *Army* – it also offers what is an optimum display of character – *inner qualities of a person that are evident in behaviour that is positive and constructive* – and finally, it gives context – *development of self, relationships and community*.

Though arguably, to provide context for the development of character, it is too vague and requires further refinement. Although the definition covers the concept of character through a multi-faceted approach, it is clear that the genesis of this definition is rooted predominantly within the field of psychology. Although psychology plays an important part in understanding character - for use within the Army - it does not completely encapsulate it. The reasoning for this hypothesis is due to the psychological concept that suggests character is generally unmalleable. For example, this definition suggests the root of character is within *the inner qualities of the person*. Basing character solely on inner qualities such as personal traits or personality is a psychological approach to defining character that is – as we will go on to see – at constant odds with current research in the field. A more contemporary approach is to accept the inner qualities of a person as part of their character which is intangible, and harness the learnt aspects of character which are tangible.

Though one can understand why Army has chosen to root its adopted definition within this academic field of psychology. Psychology is scientific and a clinical approach to a diverse and complicated field. As such, Army has chosen the scientific approach to comprehend a difficult concept. The theoretical framework for which the current doctrine is derived can be traced to two key academic theories. The first being the concept of *Intellectual Development* through specific stages by Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget (1950) and the second being the development of *Moral and Ethical Behaviour* concepts of American psychologist Lawrence Kohlberg (1984). Whilst both works are important within the stream of character academia, to tie the entire conceptual framework to just two sources is potentially too narrow for the full spectrum of character as it relates to the Army. Rather, the journey for a more inclusive and intrinsic definition must transcend multiple aspects of character beyond just the psychological. Only through this aggregation of concepts can a truly robust and relevant definition be synthesised.

Psychological Definitions

A system of relatively permanent traits manifested in a specific way that an individual reacts to others, various kinds of stimuli, and to the environment.

The above definition is that of the American Psychiatric Association as sighted by Kilburg (1997). Leonard commented on this definition suggesting that it is rooted within the famous and foundational academic works of Freud, Fromm and Reich (1997). The definition shows a relationship between character and personality through behaviour and a reaction to one surroundings. Although, what is at odds with this definition in contrast to research not rooted within the psychological stream is the suggestion that character is rooted within *relatively permanent traits.* This concept of permanent traits is the hall mark of the psychological approach for the definition of character and is echoed throughout many sources on character

within this field. Another example is offered by Pervin, this time as it relates to the concept of Moral Character (1994):

A disposition to express behaviour in consistent patterns of function across a range of situations. (p 108)

Addressing the concept of decision making within an ethical framework, again Pervin suggest these concepts are rooted in permanent behaviour or a *disposition to express behaviour*. Disposition suggest a precondition for a reaction to the environment for which the individual has limited control. This disposition could be malleable, but linking it to a concept of *consistent patterns* again aligns this definition towards one of character that is a permanent representation of an individual.

For an aggregation of concepts within an Army definition of character, it is important to recognise the field of psychology as an important component, and the concepts and ideas from within cannot be ignored. Though the concepts of behaviour being a reaction to permanent and unmalleable foundations of personality is the concept which psychologist have at odds with other segments of research within the field of character. Notwithstanding, the concepts of a psychological approach to defining character which suggest permanent factors exists within the individual is the key component of this analysis. These permanent factors are refined through background and personal experiences, though for refining a definition of character for the Army, these factors will only be a portion of an individual's character rather than the entirety. Permanent traits and personality associated behaviours that are unmalleable are concepts which will be acknowledged from the field of psychology for the development of a definition, but will only represent a portion of a concept within a wider framework.

Going beyond the psychological definitions.

The field of character definitions beyond the pure psychological approach presents a multitude of theories and concepts that deviate the concept of character into different fields of academia. It is worth noting that resistance exists for going beyond a purely psychological definition for character. For example, Eyseneck (1947) in his work on the subject warned against relating the concepts of ethics or morality in any definition of character (p 23-28). He goes on to cite Warren (1947) who defines character as *a system of directed cognitive tendencies.* Though it is important to remember the context for which multiple definitions are being explored and that the search is not for a universal definition.

Allport, in his definition of character begins to explore the concept as it relates to someone's personality. Not to be confused with the psychological approach, he related his definition of personality: *a solid organisation of dispositions and sentiments*, and related it to character, which he defined as: *related to moral philosophy* (1937). Allport summarises the relationship between the two in a neat manner: *Character is personality evaluated, and personality is character devaluated* (p 50-52). He goes on to say: *instead of defining character as the volitional aspect of personality, it is sounder to admit frankly that it is an ethical concept* (p 50-52). The interplay between character as it relates to an ethical concept represents a different field of research into the topic – a philosophical approach to defining character. The philosophical concepts of character are as wide and diverse as the psychological ones and the relationship between the two is an area from which much can be derived in the journey to composite a definition for the Army.

Hogan and Sinclair introduce this relationship between psychology and philosophy or ethics in their attempt to define character. They suggest that *character is a number of basic psychological processes* though they add *with conceptual overlap* (1997). *Conceptual*

overlap is a broad term which brings an interaction of ethics into a concept of character. They go on to define character into three areas: 1. Interpersonal traits – *Attitudes*. 2. Intrapsychic processes – *Morals*. 3. Interests and preferences – *Values*.

What is being presented by Hogan and Sinclair (1997) is key to defining character for the Army and provides a concept that is rooted within the psychological but now transcends into the ethical or philosophical fields of study. In comparison to the original definition: *those inner qualities of a person*, the balance that Hogan and Sinclair have offered represent further refinement for what could be the inner qualities of a person. These inner qualities are a combination of their interpersonal traits, but affected by conceptual overlap. It is not only who the person is that directions their actions, it is also their ethics and morals that have a choice in those actions as a response to their environment. Thus, their attitudes and morals may be pre-determined through their upbringing, but their values assimilated through their surroundings also affect their choices.

To add to this concept of reactive behaviour, Kilburn's relates dysfunctional behaviour within an organisation directly to the individual's *maladaptation and characterological defences* (1997). This concept suggests behaviour (in this case negative) is not simply reliant on the individual's inner construct, but rather, it is also reliant on their adaptation to the environment. It is related to the *conceptual overlap* introduced by Hogan and Sinclair and agrees with the definition of character by Sperry (1997): *Learned, psychosocial influences on personality* (p268).

These concepts agree also with Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1971). Bandura proposed through his research that individual behaviour is linked to a cognitive process. This cognitive process is relatable to Hogan and Sinclair's *conceptual overlap* (1997), and the definitions of Kilburn (1997) and Sperry (1997) though Bandura' hypothesis was that the

cognitive process can also take place within social settings – this being the context. Addressing behaviour, Bandura proposes that behaviour is not simply linked to reinforcement for development. Rather, it can also come from observing and extracting information from one's environment. As it relates to behaviour – it is not solely rooted in permanent traits – it is a learnt concept by the individual. Although not a definition of character, the theory of behaviour being driven by cognitive development is one that suggests malleable concepts exists beyond a purely psychological definition of character.

Going beyond the purely psychological definitions of character introduces a field of academia rooted within many other concepts. Morality, ethics, philosophy – these concepts in addition to those of a psychological approach add value and have the potential to enrich an aggregated definition purpose designed for use within the Army.

Constructing a new definition for Army

With the variety of definitions on offer from a myriad of backgrounds, it seems fitting to begin a definition of character which encapsulates the theories discussed thus far. Focusing on the original definition offered by Army and incorporating the factors of psychological pre-dispositions as well as the moral or ethical concepts in relation to reactional adaptations of the individual – we can begin to synthesis a new definition for the purposes of character within the Army:

Character is the pre-dispositions of a person combined with aspects of their personality forged through experience and education personified in their adaptational reactions.

This proposed definition is a more robust approach to the concept of character in which the research in aggregation would suggest should be adopted. Taking from both the moral and psychological academia, this definition takes us to a deeper and more relevant concept of character. It acknowledges that some of one's character is based on pre-dispositions which

are relatively unchangeable – the general psychological approach. Though, it also acknowledges that it goes beyond this to also include personality traits which are as a result of experiences or education. The final aspect brings in the concept of adaptation, learning and contextual overlap as an umbrella for which the other aspects interplay within. It is a more verbose method of portraying the original concept of *those inner qualities of a person* though in this manner, it pays respect to the multiple ways in which these inner qualities are formed and react within a person.

This is only the beginning. Context is required.

Why do Army leaders need good character? For the purpose of developing a robust and inclusive definition for use within Army, the proposed definition lacks context in comparison to the original definition discussed from Army doctrine. Within the original definition, the reason, or context, was for *positive and constructive in the development of self, relationships and community*. Though this original context is too vague and is perhaps misaligned to a tailored definition for use within Army. This is an attempt to relate character to a universal concept which arguably creates confusion. It is a statement with no pragmatic and relatable application to the reality of combat and it does not relate immediately to Army leadership.

The original choice to align this concept within the original definition within Army doctrine seems a poor choice. Army doctrine does contain a more pragmatic context for character within the Army:

...instil the qualities and attributes that allow them to adapt to their environment and to consistently make the right decisions despite the pressures of fear, chaos and danger (2005).

This clarity suggests that character development leads to the instillation of qualities and attributes – which suggest it is malleable. This could be construed as contradictory to the base definition provided by Army, or at least creates confusion in contrast. Nonetheless, the

concept of adaptation to the environment agrees with the moral components of academia discussed thus far. The context is set highlighting the desire to make right decisions despite – what is unique to service in the Army – *fear, chaos and danger*.

Nevertheless, given the nature of service within the Army, it is arguable that the context currently offered by the Army within current character doctrine - *fear, chaos and danger* - could be construed as too extreme. For example, decision making in the midst of *fear, chaos and danger* is important, and could be the ultimate test with the ultimate consequences if not done correctly. Yet, only the minority of Army leadership will be required to make decisions in this extremis. As such, the definition is not relatable and actionable day in and day out for those that are not in constant conflict. Rather, the context for character needs to be applicable and relatable to decision making in any environment. Environments that are inclusive of moral dilemmas that could be at the extreme of taking a life, or the other extreme of sending an email within the workplace. The extreme circumstance of *fear, chaos and danger* represents the minority. This context in which the Army doctrine has highlighted is important, but it must also address character as a component of decision making in any environment and aligned with the organisation.

Character as it relates to judgement and decision making

 Acknowledging that within the context of Army, decision making, morals and the reaction to the environment are all part of character is acceptance of the context for which it will be rooted in a proposed definition. This is in contrast to a pure psychological approach to what is someone's character, though it provides a pragmatic approach for Army to define and attempt to develop the character of those serving within. More so, this concept is aligned with much research into the moral and ethical components of character. Thus, the endstate for good character within an Army construct is for the individual to make decisions under pressure.

Underpinning these decisions are the cognitive aspects – the ability to think – and also the ethical aspects – the ability to judge the situation.

The research literature generally agrees with this concept. Rapaport, Gill and Shafar (1972) in their work suggest that emotions are the key to decision making. They define good judgment as *the emotionally relevant use of one's assets in regard to real situation*. (p 92). This could be construed as a disaggregated variation of a definition of character and links the importance of decision making to the concepts itself. Further adding to judgement, Davis, Skube, Hellervik, Gebele and Steard in their definition of character link judgement to the ability to *apply logic and experience to make timely and sound judgements* (1996). The *use of one's assets* or one's *logic and experience* delve into the far end of the spectrum from the psychological approach to defining character. Though the importance of an aggregated definition that also encapsulates the context for which character is important within the Army forces transcendence into a multitude of fields.

Lickona has pioneered much of the research into the concept of character with strong consideration to morality. His research which links character to decision making and individual actions is pragmatic and worth further analysis. His summation of character is broken into three distinct sections: *Moral Knowing, Moral Feeling and Moral Action.* (1991). These concepts are important to understand as they relate concepts of character as they relate to a reaction to one's environment. *Moral knowing* is the application of knowledge to the situation in which one faces. The knowledge itself relates to one's interpretation of the situation, or environment. The key areas which define moral knowing are: *Moral awareness, knowing moral values, perspective, moral reasoning, decision making and self-knowing*. This could be linked to the concept of *one's assets* and also as the application of logic to a situation.

Moral knowing is a relevant concept to this endeavour as it begins to define a decision making process as it relates to the individual as a reaction to a situation. With the understanding that the decision is the defining factor in which good character is at the core of; Lickona's first dimension of character is committed to an understanding on a personal level about the situation. *Moral Feeling* further delves into the ethical aspects of character. It is focused on the individual and their understanding of themselves – most importantly - after consideration to the situation. *Moral Feeling* is divided into the following areas: *conscience, self-esteem, empathy, loving the good, self-control and humility*. The second dimension transcends the individual into analysis of the ethical aspects of their character in relation to the situation. It considers the morality of a decision to be made and roots this decision deeply into the individual. This dimension is guiding the individual to apply the human aspect to a situation after pondering the environment prior to making a decision. *Moral Action*, is the pragmatic application of will to deed. Further refined to: *competence, will and habit* - it speaks to the individual consolidating their understanding of the situation, their understanding of themselves as a reaction to the situation to form a decision, and then applying the energy to go through with the decision. Finally, it is rested on the habitual reaction based on requirements to do the right thing over and over again. This final dimension of character links the ethical approach to defining it to the concept of decision making as a consequence. Whereas the psychological approach seems unmeasurable, this approach is based on the outcome of good character – good decisions. Thus the ethical or moral approach to character is valid towards the previously discussed outcome of Army character.

The main concern with the dimensions and overall definitions provided by Lickona are their relationships and relevance to service within the Army. There is a lack of "forced context" or "conceptual overlap" within analysis of the situation. Forced context for the purposes for this study is the context for service within the Army which are at odds with the normal moralities

that exists within society. For example: when analysing one's morality; it may be against their moral or ethical disposition to take one's life – though, through the forced context of war – this may be an action they must do over and over again. This concept is not isolated to the ethical component of a philosophical approach to character, but also the psychological approach as the forced context may also be at odds with the personality traits of that person.

As such, the two extremes of character, psychological and philosophical, must also consider the military context as it relates to character. The forced context of such things as rules of engagement (for example) is the confirmation that the definition of character for the Army must include an aspect of individual judgment as it relates to the forced context of the situation. Within the trinity of these concepts will the desired outcome of good character – a decision made within a military context by the individual – be appropriately applied.

Proposed definition of character for use within the Australian Army

Having analysed the ethical and moral aspects of character, we understand that the metric for success is the decision made by the individual as a reaction to their environment. This decision is dependent on their ability to control their emotions and use their tools, and also requires them to apply the forced context of the military to their analysis of the situation. In aggregation, the complete definition for character is offered as:

*Character is the pre-dispositions of a person combined with aspects of their personality forged through experience and education personified in their adaptational reactions **to their environment and their ability to think, judge and decide within.***

These three verbs: think, judge and decide truly bring the definition of character for Army into perspective and apply a pragmatic justification for having a specific definition.

Measuring Character

When searching for the top marksmen of the Battalion, the Command Officer looks to the shooting scores from the live fire range practice. When looking for the fittest soldier, the latest fitness test results can be relied upon. When looking for who is in charge, a detailed and easily recognised rank structure can be referenced. However, when looking for a soldier with depth of character, the military lacks a well-developed and robust framework to do this in an objective and well informed manner. Within the clinically measured environment in which the military is known for, the concept of measuring character is difficult. The next step in the journey for developing character within the Army is an analysis into the concept of measuring character. Much like the definitions of character, the concept of measuring character is rife with different theories and approaches. To complicate it further, the Army currently has a methodology for measuring character, though rudimental in its approach. As such, this section will analyse current methodologies within academia in an attempt to discover a metric which can be applied to the definition derived for use within the Army.

Current measures of character within the Army

The current methodology for measuring character within the Army is subjective and based on personal bias. Much like that experienced within society, the word character is used to surmise the overall general make-up of the individual. When attacking someone's character within the Army, this is more often than not referenced specifically to their integrity. Though as has been discussed, a more robust acceptance of character goes beyond just the concept of individual integrity. An identified failure of integrity will lead to dismissal from the Army due to an inability for the organisation to retain trust in the individual. This makes integrity a black and white concept for which boundaries exist and consequences are known. As such, integrity becomes now more of a behaviour in which the individual adapts towards based on

the environment they are in and the consequences of not conforming. Thus a sole reliance on integrity as a measure of character within the individual is not a realistic reflection of character and is a cultural norm within the Army which needs to evolve.

Within different segments of the Army, civilian tools have been harnessed and used to reflect on character, though this is by exception and not the norm within all branches. The only measurement which currently exists within Army for which and individual can receive feedback on their character is through formal or informal performance counselling and reporting. Within the Performance Appraisal Report (PAR), there are units for identifying a person's personal traits not directly related to performance (or work output). *Army* or *Defence Ethos* is the prime example of an area in which leaders receive measured feedback. The modern scale is a simple relation to the Army rank structure: *Below Worn Rank, At Worn Rank* or *Above Worn Rank* - and it relates to the perceived application of Army values by an individual over a period of time – *Courage, Initiative, Respect* and *Teamwork*.

This methodology presents several issues. The first is in relation to the depth for which this measurement is used within Army. PARs are only raised for those who have gained a certain qualification of rank, and as such, only a small portion of the whole are in receipt of this feedback. The broad manner of which this area is framed and also the general nature of the simplistic scoring system offers very little by way of identifying specific and tangible issues (outside of the associated word picture). Though the most significant concern with this method of measurement is the personal bias that exists. Personal bias firstly relates to what the assessor believes to be good character - in which has been identified is normally solely associated with integrity – and also personal bias of the assessor towards the individual being assessed. As such, the measurement is not clinical and based on human perceptions influenced by emotion rather than a metric based on evidence. Therefore, the current model

for measuring character, and indeed the very methodology that exists within the Army is in need of further development.

The second issue with the use of the PAR for a measurement of character relates back to the definition of character derived within this project thus far. As identified, the existing definition does not speak to the entire concept of character which is suggested should be adopted within the Army. Though hypothetically - if this definition were to be adopted – again this methodology to measure character would not be adequate. It would continue to be tainted by bias as it requires each assessor to have an understanding of this definition and relate performance against it. With such an inclusive definition as has been derived, a simple measurement such as this is not adequate.

The limited measurement of character within the Army and its heavy reliance on integrity represents a clear requirement for growth and evolution. Although a concept exists, it is enabling a culture within the Army of misunderstanding and personal bias as it relates to measuring character. As such, experience from academic tools outside of the Army will be explored as well as analysis to assess compatibility for Army needs and suitability for inclusion in a hybrid and synthesised tool for use within the Army.

The Defining Issues Test

Within the field of character measurement, there are many tools and test that are readily available. Much like the endeavour to define character, the journey to measure it is also a convolution of theories which transcends the fields of psychology and philosophy with an attempt at clinical application. One such model that falls into the psychological spectrum is the Defining Issues Test (DIT). The DIT devised by Rest (1974) was designed to extend the work of Kohlberg (1969). Kohlberg's original work – a theory of cognitive-development - which encompassed a concept of "moral development" through stages was an attempt to

define the development of an individual through different stages of growth from childhood to adulthood based on their test results. Kohlberg's later work would go on to be one of the two theories in which the Army currently rests its character development framework upon. The test itself requires an interviewer who presents a subject to a number (original test was 12) of scenarios. Following introduction to the scenario, the subject would be given multiple issues relating to the scenario. They would then be required to identify which of this issues were most important to them. Rest's concept was the through the understanding of the scenario and then subsequent choice of the most important issue based on personal appreciation; a display of personal morals would occur which would relate to what stage of personal character development the individual represented.

Much academia within the field of character development has sprouted from the concepts of Kohlberg and the DIT whose focus was on the moral development of the individual. It has been used through many organisations as a measurement for group character trends and to identify the moral health of an organisation. The methodology is robust as compared to what currently exists within Army. It requires the individual to make hypothetical decisions within the scenario for which they are introduced to. As an application of their character, this methodology is ideal for testing all the parameters for character within the Army re-definition. Through the scenario, the individual must ponder their experiences, their training and also their reactions to their environment which is linked to a decision for which they must make (in their selection of an issue).

The DIT is also very relatable to "scenario training" that occurs within the Army which tests an individual's reactions or adaptation to a hypothetical situation. Although scenario training produces good results for individual holistic development, the quality of data that it presents relevant to character development within the Army is questionable. Scenario training is more focused on the development of the reactions of the individual with considerations to such

things as rules of engagement and application of military law (for example). It does not produce tangible and measurable data for analysis and is often linked to the concept of "moral dilemmas" rather than character development.

Although the DIT is a successfully used tool (with numerous versions continuing to be released) it has many criticisms. Personal bias of the interviewer is a factor which cannot be diluted or ignored. It is also time consuming and demands an interviewer who has intimate knowledge of the process to be involved. These criticisms relate to the DIT for a possible tool for use within Army to measure character. If a version of the DIT was to be synthesised for use within the Army, it would be heavily reliant on the interviewer from both a time and experience perspective. As to use this tool to gain benefits for growth, the issues that were selected throughout the process would need to be reflected upon in a guided and controlled manner between both interviewer and individual being tested. This is a process of guided self-reflection which is very popular and currently exists within multiple methods for developing character. Though its flaws rest within the personal bias from which the interviewer is guiding the individual. The bias is not so much down to the individual interviewer - which has been previously discussed and a large influence - rather the bias is as it relates to the consistency from which the guided reflection would be maintain between different interviewers over a large group of participants. A hypothetical DIT designed for service within the Army would only be as good as the interviewer conducting it.

The second issue with the DIT relates to the concept of moral development from which it has its roots. Moral development within the original DIT was as it relates to societal norms. Looking at one of the most famous scenarios within the original format of the DIT, we see that it is a complex decision from which the individual must hypothetically make:

A woman was near death from a special kind of cancer. There was one drug that the doctors thought might save her. It was a form of radium that a druggist in the same town had recently discovered. The drug was expensive to make, but the druggist was charging ten times what the drug cost him to produce. He paid $200 for the radium and charged $2,000 for a small dose of the drug. The sick woman's husband, Heinz, went to everyone he knew to borrow the money, but he could only get together about $1,000 which is half of what it cost. He told the druggist that his wife was dying and asked him to sell it cheaper or let him pay later. But the druggist said: "No, I discovered the drug and I'm going to make money from it." So Heinz got desperate and broke into the man's laboratory to steal the drug for his wife. Should Heinz have broken into the laboratory to steal the drug for his wife? Why or why not?

The choices the respondent can now make relate to Kohlberg's Moral Developmental stages. Each answer reflecting the suggested stage of an individual based off the consequences for their actions and relativity to this scenario. This concept of relating the scenario to choices which reflect the stages (*obedience, self-interest, conformity, law-and-order, human rights, universal human ethics*) relates well within the context of societal norms. Though this does not translate well into the scenario of service within the Army. This is due to the fact that service within the Army requires individuals to perform acts which do not align with social norms. The most simplistic example is the taking of another human's life in combat. Although this may not be acceptable to the individual carrying out the action, through the scenario and training, it will be a conscious decision that they will make. As such the DIT format within Army is not so much looking for the developmental stages of the individual, but rather, it would be looking at the justifications for actions as they relate to the Army context – a utilitarian approach to exercising command. This already exists within scenario training as previously discussed.

The DIT is a popular and powerful tool within the realm of character assessment, though it does not appropriately measure character in a simple and tangible format for use within the Army towards the development of character. What can be harvested from the DIT is the breadth from which it requires individuals to think about their actions. The depth for which the individual is plunged into the hypothetical scenario is a true test of their character - although it comes at great cost to time and is not without bias. Though it does highlight the importance and potential that exists within guided reflection. Although the development of a character development tool within Army will not be able to replicate a DIT scenario as the aim is for self-guided character development, understanding the context for which the tool can fit into the already standing character development framework is important. As such, the successful and ongoing use of the DIT confirms that the Army character development tool should not be a standalone tool that works independently from existing concepts, but rather, it should enhance and compliment the already adopted methodologies currently in existence.

The Character Assessment Rating and Behavioural Desirability Scale

The Character Assessment Rating Scale (CARS) and Behavioural Desirability Scale (BDS) are tools developed by Barlow, Jordan and Hendrix in their work to determine levels of character within the United States Air Force as a comparison between sexes and ranks (2003). This study is based on the theoretical concepts already discussed by Lickona and his theory of character development within the three areas of *Moral Knowing, Moral Feeling and Moral Action* (1991).

The CARS and BDS are self-assessments based upon self-reflective questions which prompt analysis of character dimensions from an individual perspective. The CARS is a test in which respondents are given items measuring 12 dimensions associated with the application of *Moral Knowing*. Respondents are then required to rate themselves between 0 (Never) and 8

(Always) in their assessment of their frequency displaying these traits. The BDS on the other hand lists a series of behaviours that relate to the 12 dimensions and respondents are required to rate each behaviour as to their desirability between 1 (Extremely Undesirable) to 9 (Extremely Desirable).

The CARS and the BDS take a very different approach to that of the DIT due to their roots being within different theoretical approaches to character measurement and development. Unlike the DIT, the individual is not forced into a scenario, but rather, required to reflect upon their own traits and how they perceive them. This opens up a different dynamic as it relates to the measurement of character. The unique approach of self-assessment is one that comes at minimal cost to the organisation as it can be done with limited resources and at no cost of an interviewer – unlike the DIT. The self-assessment is certainly a concept for which the Army Character Development Tool can take away.

Though like the DIT; the CARS and BDS are not without their faults for use within the Army. The experiment from which they were conceived was within a military context (in this case US Air Force), and was a stand-alone questionnaire from which the individual completed over no set time to a level which matched their understanding of the test parameters. The individual bias again comes to play, but this time regarding the participants' knowledge of the test they are sitting through. This not only speaks to their understanding, but also to their interpretation of each dimension of behaviour in which they associate themselves with. The original test offered a definition of each, but again, contextualising this comes down to the individual and their self-awareness or emotional intelligence.

An additional flaw with the CARS and BDS within their original format is the context for which the test was done. Something that is self-guided with no feedback arguably has an inability to better the person partaking in the questionnaire. The original experiment used the

data collected for analysis and to identify trends as they relate to sex and rank within the US Air Force. This is indeed a measure of character, though for the purposes of the experiment; not of the individuals partaking. As such, if a CARS or BDS style of measurement were to be synthesised for use within the Army, it would need to be reflective to the participant through its results produced in a format which represent tangible information for reflection. In addition, it would need to be understood that this information is not comparable to a measurable metric as it is tainted with subjectivity of the person and their understanding of each trait or behaviour.

Notwithstanding, the CARS and BDS do present us with data that can be manipulated across different formats. Unlike the DIT; there is no outcome to a decision, but rather, an analysis of the individual traits and behaviours which would then – in a complete moral decision making system - go to feed a decision. Using Lickona's model, an assessment can be made towards what areas within *Moral Knowing* are strong (or weak) within the individual as well as *Moral Feeling*. Whereas the DIT was able to assess what stage an individual was at through their simulated actions – *Moral Action*, the CARS and BDS provided insight to the individual and their self-recognition – *Moral Knowing* and *Moral Feeling*.

The linkages between associating answers to traits or behaviours which are linked to theories and scaling these with a number is a powerful tool within the concept of developing character in the Army. It provides data which can be measured and linked to a scale. The quality of the data is tainted by individual subjectivity, and as such the measurements need to take this into account, but the format of the BDS and CARS represent a procedure which is ideal for use within Army. By going through each trait or behaviour and requiring the individual to reflect and scale their frequency in which they display these forces the individual to align what they understand of their character across a number of concepts of which they may not have

previously thought of. As such, their character is now being defined, extracted and measured from their perceptions to the theoretical base of knowledge.

What can be extracted from analysis of the CARS and BDS is a format from which to translate perceptions into measurable data. Within this data sits potential for character development. For use within the Army, this data would need to be shaped and then reflected back to the individual in some manner as to represent their character in a more objective format than previous experienced. The CARS and BDS as stand-alone tests are not of benefit for character development endeavours within the Army, though these tools have introduced a powerful methodology which can be considered for synthesising a tailor made tool.

Going beyond measuring character

It is clear that no one tool represents a standalone solution that aligns the definition of character best suited for use within Army. Though what they do represent is the potential to harvest key ideas and concepts to formulate a hybrid tool within Army. Looking at further character measuring concepts presents studies which go beyond a concept of simply measuring character which are noteworthy.

A recent study that addresses the concept of character self-assessment as an indicator of performance is that of Gayton and Kehoe (2015). They commenced a study in which participants of a Special Forces selection course were required to rank their character traits in descending order to identify their strengths and weaknesses prior to commencement of their training. An analysis of this test would concur with the concepts of Lickona which saw the individuals participating in an exercise of *Moral Knowing* – self-awareness. Though this experiment has created a linkage between the self-awareness of personal character attributes in direct relation to performance within the Army setting. The rating system was not an assessment of traits or behaviours from which to scale, akin to the CARS and BDS, rather, it

was a list of traits in which each individual needed to process and then rank in descending order those which they felt were most relevant to them. It is a different approach to formulating objective data within a field of character interpretation from that of the CARS and BDS.

Participants then went on to the selection course which would go on to have an attrition rate of 84% (2015). Of those that were successful (16%), a pattern emerged in their self-assessments of their character traits prior to commencement of training. Of those that did not identify three specific traits (*team worker, integrity and persistence*) in their top four character traits failed to pass the selection course. Conversely, the presence of one or two of these traits within the top ranks predicted a likelihood to succeed (p 156).

The direct relation to self-assessment of character traits linked with performance is key. The journey for character measurement has been to find a metric in which data could be applied fed from one's character. Although it was discussed that individual bias plays a role within the self-assessment aspects of the CARS and BDS; within this experiment, it shows the potential of having strong identification of personal character traits can be linked to strong performance. What can be harvested from this experiment is the proof that character traits can be linked to performance. As such, to adopt a system in which character traits are not measured; but rather understood, could be the key for development. Although the ranking of traits as a predicator is not the aim of the Army tool, the understanding of character strengths and weaknesses defined by traits and behaviours is a concept from which the Army tool can further develop upon.

360 Reporting to measure character

Along the same lines of self-assessment, a similar experiment was conducted by Helzer, Furr, Hawkins, Barranti, Blackie, and Fleeson (2014) regarding the self-measurement of character

traits. In this experiment, using the HEXACO personality Inventory – with focus on the dimension of *Honesty/Humility* – and also the Moral Foundations Questionnaire (MFQ), individuals were required to conduct a self-assessment of what has been defined as their *Moral Character*. The format of the MFQ was similar to that of the CARS and BDS. 41 moral character traits were described and individuals were required to rate themselves in relation to each using a five points scale (1 being *very accurate* up to 5 being *very inaccurate*). This experiment then required the friends and families of the participants to complete the same MFQ but in relation to the test subject. This was a deliberate attempt to gain multiple sources of character results in relation to the individual for comparison. The results showed that consistencies existed between self-assessment and third party assessments – an outcome which Helzer et al claim as proof of the existence of *Moral Character* as a measurable and tangible trait (2014).

This experiment and the proof of consistencies between self-appraisal and third party appraisal is an aspect of character development worth defining further for use within the Army. The concept of getting outsider assessment of one's character and comparing these results with self-analysis is a concept of data creation for which much potential exists. For future development of an Army tool, a concept from which the data from self-assessment as well as related data from external assessment could be aggregated together to produce a character summary for further individual reflection is one worth further investigation.

Another experiment worth noting is that by Gonzalez, Green, Hodgson & Wheeler (2012). Within this experiment, a concept of "360 reporting" was conducted in an attempt to measure individual levels of transformational leadership. Through an analysis of self, peers, supervisor and follower data via *the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire* and *Leadership Virtues Questionnaire*, Gonzalez et al attempted to aggregate individual perceptions of a single leader from different facets. This experiment yielded results in relation to transformational

leadership traits and the relationship to follower satisfaction. Though what can be harvested from this experiment is the concept of a multi-faceted analysis of an individual. Akin to the experiment conducted by Helzer et al, this experiment produced data for comparison for the one individual. Though it goes further as to place emphasis and importance on follower perceptions of the individual as a leader as it relates to their transformational leadership scores. The resulting alignment of these two areas are seen as proof that transformational leadership yields the most follower satisfaction. For Army character development the significance is the power of perceptions and cross examining this with self-assessment scores. What the DIT, CARS and BDS could not offer was data from which opinion of self was put in comparison to opinion from others as it relates to individual character. This aggregation of data produces a field from which self-reflection on character traits can blossom from - albeit tainted with personal bias. Nonetheless, the input of perceptions and opinion has the ability to somewhat authenticate the scores from which an individual assesses themselves within an Army tool. The experiments of Helzer et al (2014) and Gonzalez et al (2012) have introduced new methodologies which in combination with other concepts captured thus far should produce a robust platform from which the Character Development Tool within Army can begin to develop.

Character Awareness, not Character Measurement

All the tools and methods of measurement which have been analysed were constructed for a set purpose and within the confines of the experiments in which they were associated. All these tools within their own areas measured character to a certain degree, but none of the tools provided a measurement of character that met the necessities of clinical and unbiased data cross sectioned within the Army definition of character (of which has been proposed).

What becomes apparent is that within such a vast and convoluted field, to have a tool that produces a measurement of such detail and accuracy in actually an impossibility.

As such, focus on the requirement for character measurement needs further refinement. The definition of character as it relates to Army took place within this research project as to benchmark an ideal concept for individuals to better their character. To measure this character was then the next goal as to have a benchmark to then take into the ultimate endstate – character development. Though without an ability to measure character, this concept now needs to adjust slightly from one of character measurement to one of Character Awareness.

Character Awareness is a concept that very little academic work has placed much emphasis upon. Each of the experiments and tools that have been analysed were for the measurements in the production of data for a stated hypothesis. Rather, the concept of Character Awareness is to use the same tools for the production of data to make the individual aware of their own character traits and behaviours. Within this concept of Character Awareness, there is no concept of strengths or weaknesses, but rather levels of character traits from which agreeance or disagreeance has been obtained through inputs from self and perceptions of others.

To make people aware of their character in detail is a step in the right direction towards character development. The adoption of a concept of Character Awareness will see benefit for two reasons. The first is the application of one's character into a defined concept. This step will force the individual to break their character down across the tool and segment their whole character within traits identified through research. For many participants, this will be an insight into their character from a prism which they most likely have not gauged before. As such, through the process of defining their character within the given mould, they will become aware of themselves to a greater detail than when they began. Secondly and in

addition to the first step; to then have further input on the same concepts but from the perceptions of others will create agreeance and disparities between what is perceived by self as appose to what others perceive. In aggregation, they will experience a greater awareness of their character across a set format and definition and in turn have a greater understanding of what areas of their character can be developed further.

Accepting within the Army that character is a concept that cannot be measured but rather a concept that one can only become aware of will be difficult for the system to accept. Though the fact remains that within this complicated field, simple answers do not exist. The key now lies in the way in which this data will be used for ongoing character development. What has been gained through the analysis thus far is that each tool had something from which can be extracted and harvested towards the unique goal of developing character within the Army. The construct of a hybrid tool which heavily relies upon all the concepts discussed thus far is the next step in the journey to developing a tool to better the character of those within the Army.

Developing Character

"Character is the pre-dispositions of a person combined with aspects of their personality forged through experience and education personified in their adaptational reactions to their environment and their ability to think, judge and decide within."

Current Army approach to developing character

Army's current methodology for developing character has a heavy focus on guided reflection. Within the current doctrine for Army character (2005), the conduct of character development is a *Command responsibility* and relies on using opportunities within the *normal training continuum* to develop character through reflections of past experiences.
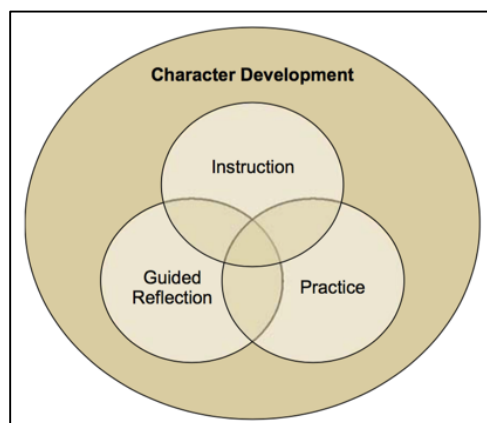
Picture 1 – The Army Model for Character Development (2005)

The above picture highlights the relationship Army applies between *Instruction, Guided Reflection* and *Practice* towards the conduct of character development. The doctrine is heavily focused on the leader guiding the individual through reflective processes to decipher experiences and work through a process of analysis.
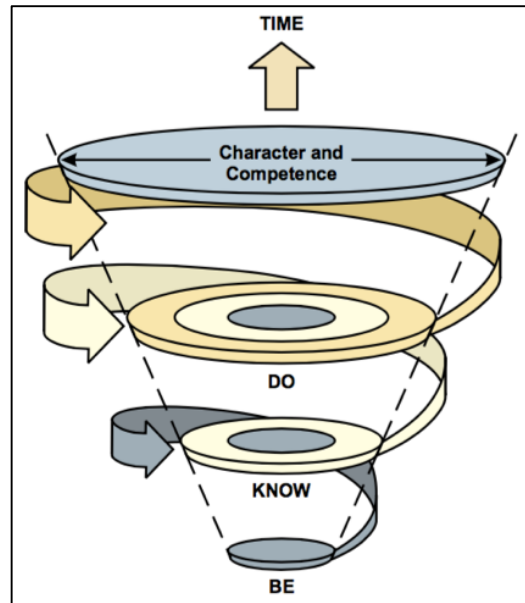
Picture 2 – The Army Model for Guided Reflection (2005)

The Army Model for Guided Reflection is a set of filters used by Army to assist with guided reflection of experiences. It is based on a concept of debriefing within the format of an "after action review". It is suggestive that Chaplains within the Army are best suited for the conduct of this reflection.

The Army doctrine for the development of character goes through various ideas and concepts for which character development using the above two diagrams can progress throughout a normal training environment. As was highlighted within the analysis of the DIT, guided self-reflection is a powerful tool, but the concept of conducting meaningful guided reflection requires a heavy investment from the organisation of both resources and time.

The Army methodology for the development of character is a pragmatic approach. It takes into account multiple facets which enable reflection of self to better character – concepts which have been discussed throughout this research project. Although the root definition is askew; the methodology lines up well with the proposed definition of character. As such, the current doctrine into character development within the Army will not be ignored completely

in the development of a tool to better character within the Army. Rather, it will be amplified through the research and analysis conducted thus far. The aim is to construct a Character Development Tool using key concepts and ideas harvested from a variety of resources, but maintaining a linkage to the current methodologies within doctrine as to assist with acceptance and transition of the proposed tool from that of theory to pragmatic application. In this instance, a significant change to doctrine is not being suggested, but rather, an amplification of the process is being offered through a more refined and detailed tool for the development of character which can be incorporated within the original concepts of Army doctrine.

The Character Development Tool

In the final part of this research project, linkages between a definition of character specific to the development of individuals within the Army and analysis into what we now define as Character Awareness will come together in a proposed methodology for the development of character for ongoing trailing and evaluation. This process is defined as the Character Development Tool (CDT).

Methodology for the development of character is a balance between application of academic theory as well as pragmatic approach for use within the Army. In a time and resource limited environment, the application needs to put the user through a process in which they know will better their character, though they may not necessarily know how it will do so in detail. For example, the goal is not to make users learn the proposed definition of character, but rather to dissect their character traits and behaviours aligned with this definition for further analysis.

The proposed CDT is dived into two key areas. The first is the Character Awareness Graph (CAG) and the second is the Self-reflection Model (SRM).

Character Awareness Graph (CAG)

The genesis of the CAG is linked to the concepts which formulated the CARS (based off Lickona's model of character) but extends to also include the character traits highlighted by Gayton and Kehoe (2015) within the format developed by Barlow et al (2003) to present a self-assessment of character within a tangible format for analysis. It is a process for the translation of subjective character concepts into objective measurable data. This is not the creation of a measurement for comparison, but rather, it is for the creation of data for Character Awareness. It is intended to make the individual think about their individual character traits and behaviours much deeper than they may have before, and then putting this into a graphical format to then see this analysis in a format in which they may not have seen before.

Character Items

The dissection of character along the CAG will use the format from the CARS by assessing character traits and behaviours (defined as Character Items) on a scale from 1-8 highlighting the frequency in which the individual displays the said behaviour or trait (Never, Seldom, Sometimes, Generally, Always). The actual items which are being assessed have been selected across a broad spectrum of research literature. The 12 dimensions from the original CARS has been included as have the 24 character descriptors from the work of Gayton and Kehoe (2015). In addition to this, a survey was conducted amongst Army senior leadership for their opinion of which character traits and behaviours should be included which fed back an additional 14 traits. With the subtraction of duplicates, this has produced a list of 42 character items for which to dissect one's character across.
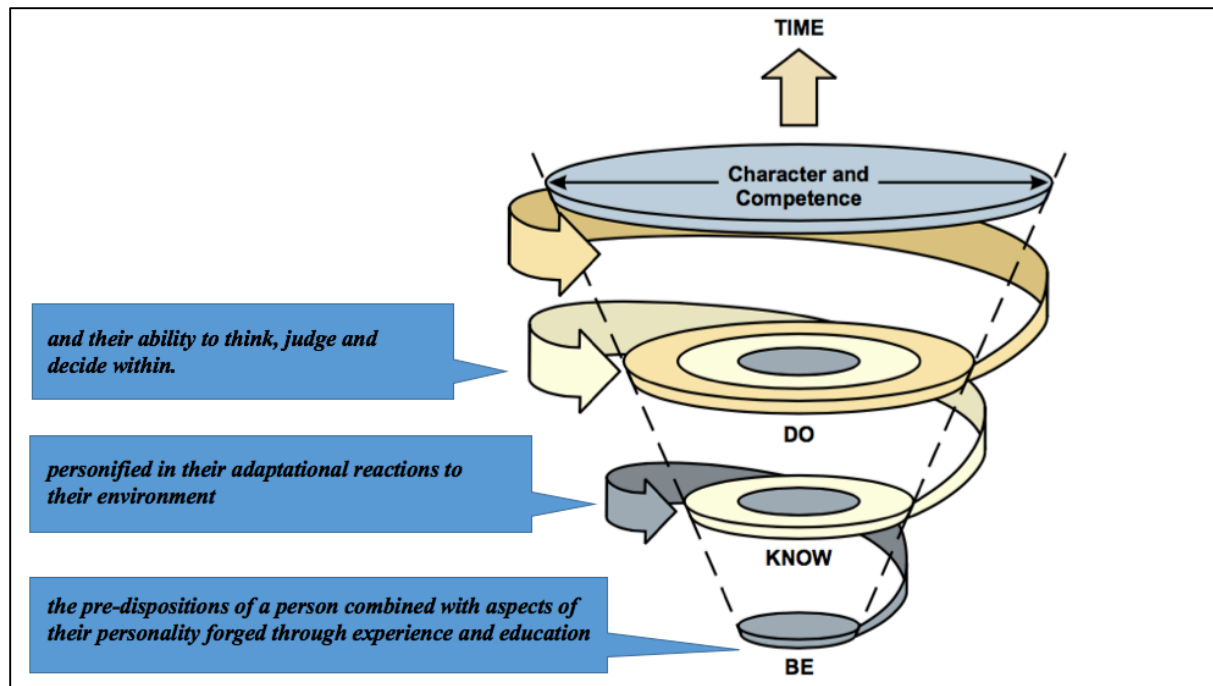
Picture 3 – Linkages between Army Doctrine and the proposed Character Definition

The character items are broken up into three distinct categories which align with the definition of character that has been proposed. The first group aligns with the concept of *the pre-dispositions of a person combined with aspects of their personality forged through experience and education* and also aligns with the concept of Lickona's *Moral Knowing*. This first group is simply known as "Be", which aligns with current Army doctrine for leadership and character development. This is more of a convenience linkage, although it also assists to contextualise the process within the Army setting.

The second list of character items link to the concept of *personified in their adaptational reactions to their environment* and represent Lickona's concept of *Moral Feeling*. These character items are grouped together under the heading of "Know".

The final group of character items are linked to the concept of *and their ability to think, judge and decide within* and represents Lickona's concept of Moral Action. Linkages with Army doctrine continue as this group is labelled as "Do" for referencing purposes.

| Be	Know	Do
• Integrity	• Loyalty	• Competency
• Honesty	• Empathy	• Decisiveness
• Self-Discipline	• Selflessness	• Cooperativeness
• Spiritual Appreciation	• Compassion	• Good judgement
• Curiosity	• Respectfulness	• Bravery
• Love of Learning	• Social Intelligence	• Fairness
• Ingenuity	• Kindness	• Leadership
• Wisdom	• Teamwork	• Courage
• Persistence	• Gratitude	• Service to the Nation
• Prudence	• Optimism	• Moral Courage
• Humility	• Forgiveness	• Pursuit of Excellence
• Appreciation of Beauty	• Enthusiasm	• Self-Control
• Humour	• Loving	• Self-Discipline
• Initiative		
• Pragmatism		
• Self-Awareness		

Picture 4 – Character Items

Mapping the CAG

The items are then assessed by the individual line by line. Note – For the purposes of this research project, the first nine character items have been selected for explanatory purposes only. Reference material exists which explain each character item (attached as Appendix A) and the individual rates themselves accordingly. The format in which they rate themselves takes on a different role than that of the CARS or BDS. Rather than horizontal listings of answers, the graph is designed to score each trait vertically. This is a purpose designed method to represent scores is a graphical format as to create data for analytical stimulus.
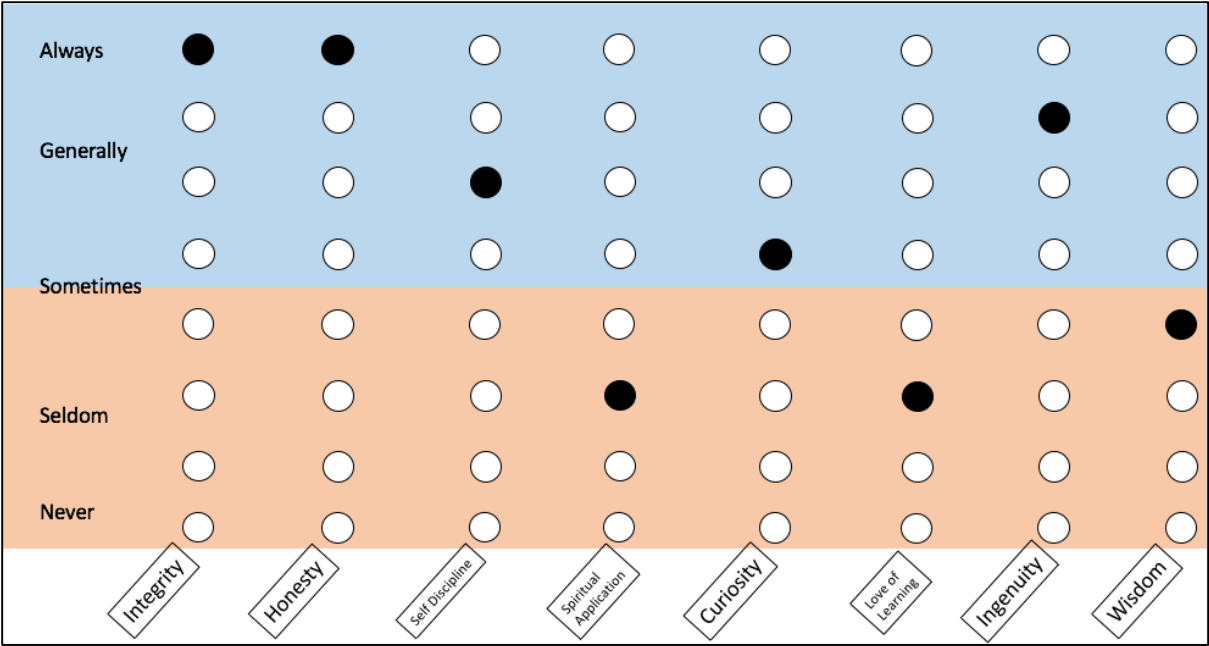
Picture 5 – Character Items - Scoring

The final step is to simple link the scores with a line as to create a graph. This is simply to show trends across the answers and create the desired graph effect.
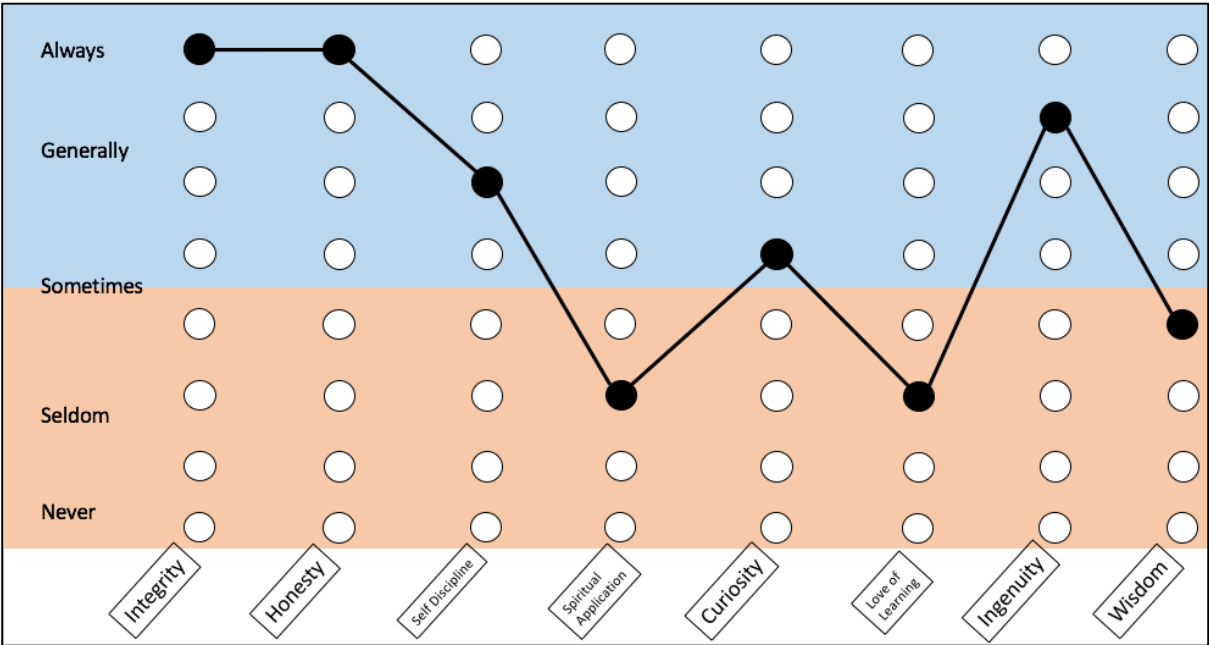
Picture 6 - Completed Sample Graph

Analysis of the completed CAG

With a completed CAG, the process for self-led analysis can begin. The purpose of focusing the CAG for self-led analysis is one of time and resources. As identified during the analysis of the DIT – guided reflection is the best tool for insight, albeit tainted with personal bias. However, its consumption of time and resources makes it a luxury rather than a reality. The purpose of the presentation of character data within this format is to perform the role of a mediator by provoking thought for reflection.
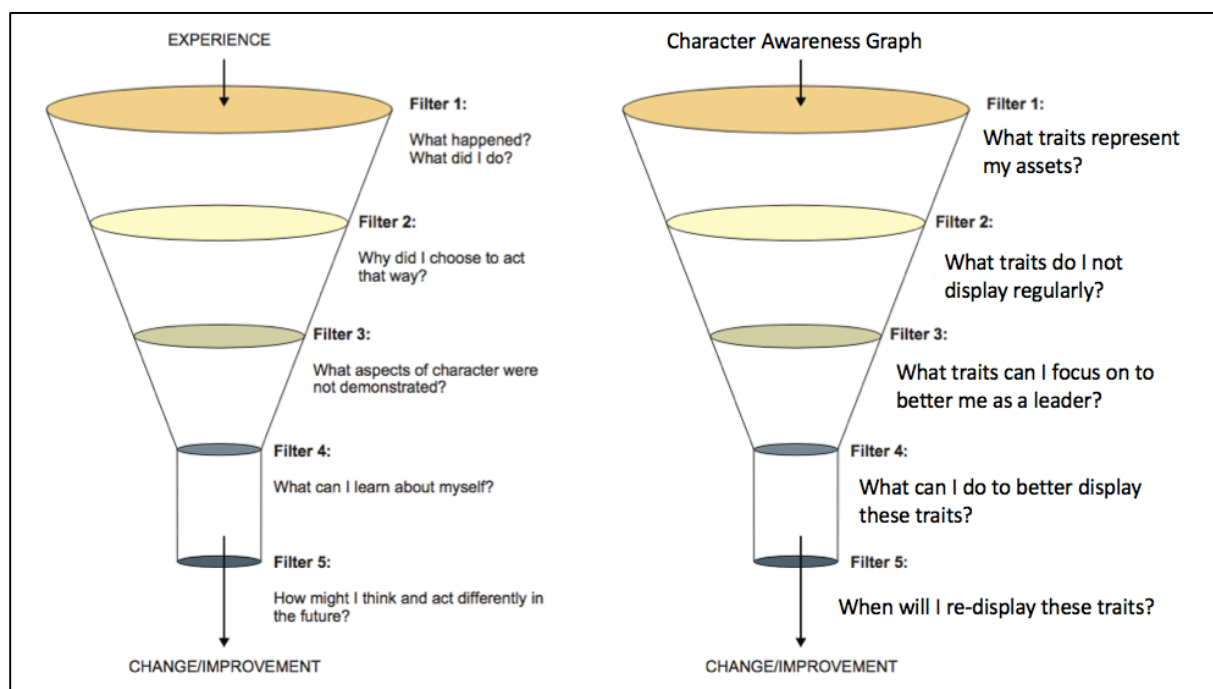
Picture 7 – Original guided reflection model vs CAG revised Self-reflection Model (SRM)

The methodology for reflection will take the format introduced within the current guided reflection model within Army Doctrine on Character development (2005). Using this concept of "filters", the original format has been re-oriented for self-led reflection based on the data produced within the CAG.

It is based on a concept of goal setting in which the individual analyses what are their strengths (*What items represent my assets?*) and then focuses on their weaknesses (*What*

items do I not display regularly?). Though the terms strengths and weaknesses are not used. This is to allow for the wide range of personal applications for the items within. For example, an individual may not display a certain trait – for example *spiritual application* – though whether this is to be perceived as a weakness or not is up to the individual and their individual circumstances. As to not have any bias within the process, the concept aligns with that of Character Awareness rather than character measurement. The colour coding of the CAG (blue for high scores, red for low scores) assists with this categorisation, but again, does not suggest good or bad. Rather, it simple separates between what is closely associated with individual character and what is not.

The next filter begins the deeper analysis for the individual. Through this filter (*What traits can I focus on to better me as a leader?)* the individual is prompted to reflect on their scores and graph as it relates to their leadership role within the Army. There is a reliance on the individual to display a depth of self-awareness within the setting. It is the beginning of a process of identification of areas which the person can work on with regards to their character.

The final two filters represent a goal setting mentality and putting thoughts into actions. The fourth filter (*What can I do to better display these traits?*) is when pragmatism is required and the individual works through what actions can be taken to better their identified shortcomings, and the final filter (*When will I re-display these traits?*) is the timeline in which their plan is mapped along. These final steps are arguably the most important as they tie in the analysis with a way forward for further development.

The CAG and self-reflection

The CAG and self-reflection guide is the simplistic format in which the Character Development Tool is suggested for use. Through this methodology, the research of character

definition, measurement (awareness) and practical format in which to represent this, is also combined with current Army doctrine. The simplicity of the design is the key to the concept. Without requiring a depth of knowledge of character academia, the individual is guided through a journey and application of knowledge. In addition, it is able to be completed at any time with no cost of resources to the organisation. It can also be used on any time scale for reflection. An individual could complete this CAG for a large period of time, or for a short duration activity. It is not linked to one set purpose, but rather, is a simple tool which can be used throughout any time period for a purpose without distracting from normal and higher priority training requirements.

Though the self-reflection format comes with risk. It is heavily reliant on the individual to display a depth of self-awareness and acceptance of the format. It is also of limited utility if not completed fully. As such, guided reflection through individual CAG would be a better format for the development of character. Thus, the CAG is designed to be used either way and to compliment the current character development doctrine of the Army.

The CAG using 360 Degree reporting

The optimum use of the CAG is for use within a 360 degree reporting format. Based on the works of Helzer et al (2014) and Gonzalez et al (2012), the power of external influence on personal reflection is applied.

For use within a 360 degree reporting format, the initial CAG is completed, and then an additional CAG is completed by an external person. The results are then mapped alongside the original (individual) CAG results.
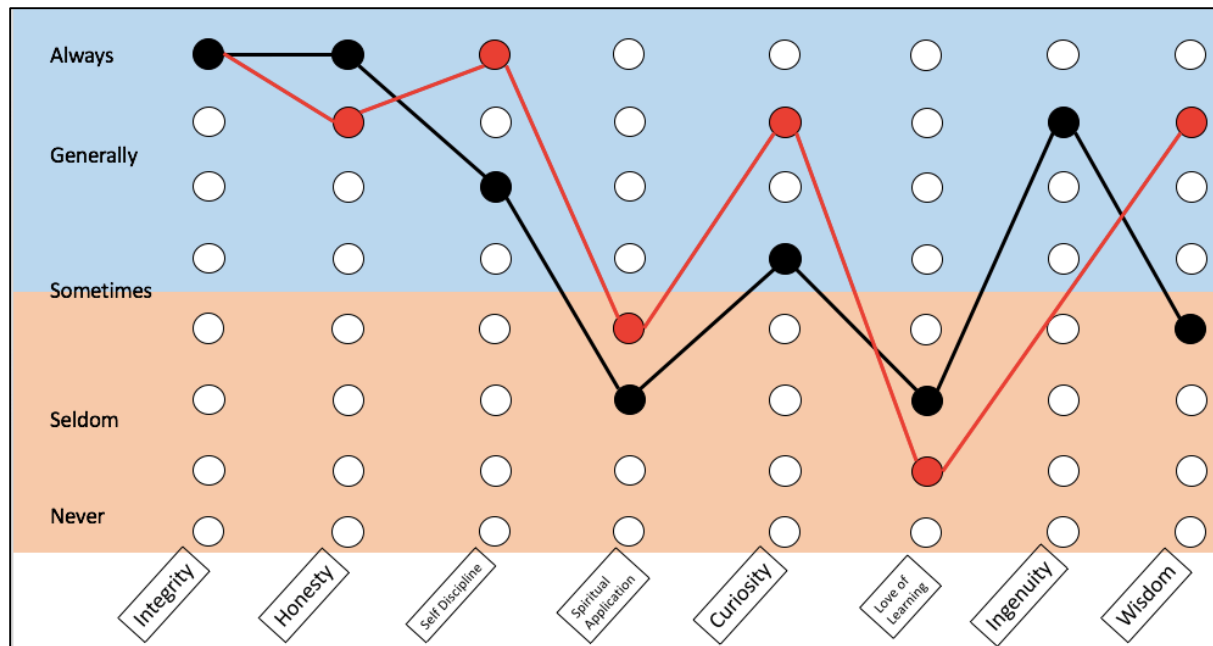
Picture 8 – 360 Degree CAG aggregated with original results

Plotting and linking the external scores in a different coloured pen, the individual is now presented with a different display of data in comparison with their original results as to conduct further analysis and self-led reflection. The results will either be agreeance (same result) or differing scores (either higher or lower) than the original.

These variations represent the difference between own character items displayed and those that are perceived by others. The purpose of aggregation is to highlight all areas, be them agreeance or variation. This methodology forces the individual to take their internal analysis a step further by having concepts of their character scrutinised by an outside source.
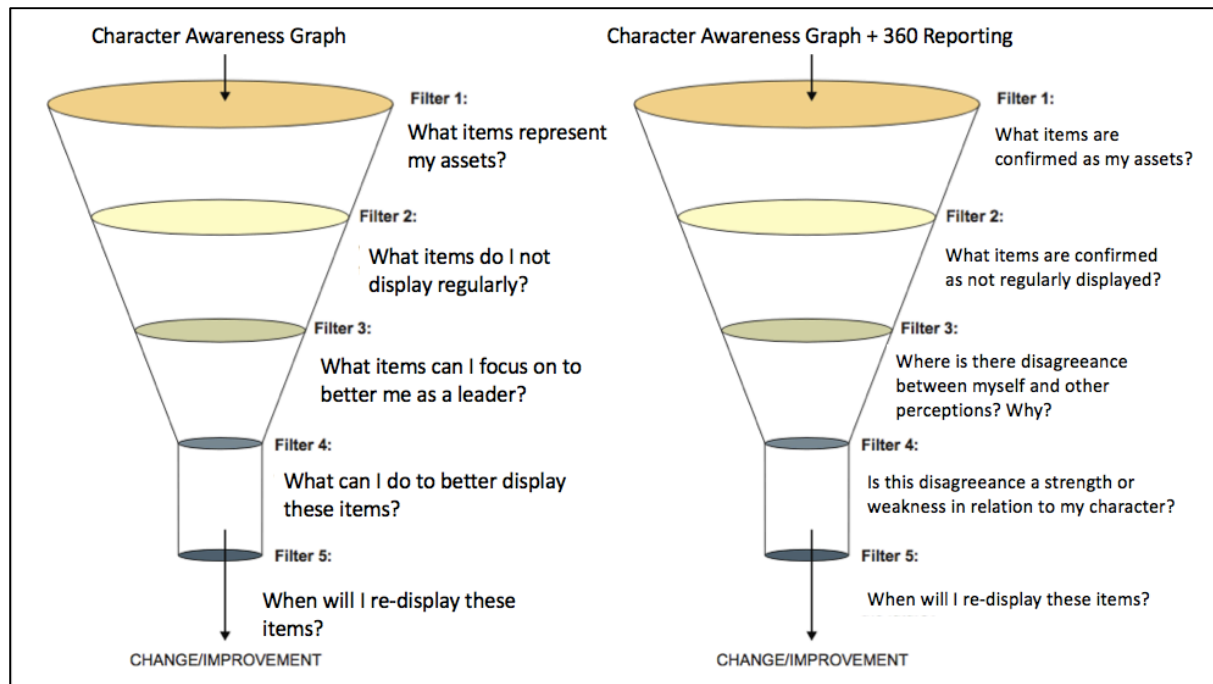
Picture 9 – CAG revised reflection model vs 360 degree reporting reflection model

The information is then passed through another reflection model; this time each filter has been adjusted to meet the feedback received in comparison to original CAG scores. The first filter (*Which items are confirmed as my assets?*) allow the individual to confirm which items they deemed as their most displayed to be confirmed by outside sources. This confirmation will be the link between displayed character items and perceived character items and is aimed to give confidence to the individual. The next filter (*What items are confirmed as not regularly displayed?*) is another confirmation, but this time for items in which the individual knows they do not represent.

The ability to gain insightful analysis at this stage of reflection exists. For example, if an individual was to rate themselves as a low in *self-discipline* - they may be aware of this and attempt to keep this as a personal item for awareness. Though through the confirmation of this rating by an external source, this alignment may provoke the individual to take action as a personal character item is being reflected back to them as a confirmed perception of others. As such, agreeance may also prompt reflection for change.

The third filter begins to address variances between the two scales (*Is there disagreeance between myself and other perceptions? Why?*). In this filter, the individual should be prompted to conduct their most analysis. The power in the 360 degree reporting format comes through disagreeance in perceptions and sparks reflection. This step is heavily reliant on the individual focusing on the *Why?* aspect of the filter. Possibility for bias exists based on personal opinion, though the acceptance of perception as a perceived reality needs to be fostered within this filter. Though again, variances do not always suggest a negative. For example, a self-assessed item of *Leadership* as low against a 360-degree result of a high score could be a perception in which the individual processes as a positive. They could be prompted to ponder that they either are perceived in a better light regarding their *leadership* than they assume of themselves, or that in fact their *leadership* is higher than they have given it credit for. The avenues for reflection are limitless within this format.

This links to the next filter (*Is this disagreeance a strength or weakness in relation to my character?*) and the interpretation of feedback received from the outside source. Linked to the last filter, the individual now interprets the variance in a manner which they deem fit. This links to the last filter (*When will I re-display this item again?*) which is the goals setting aspect of the filter akin to the original reflection model.

The CAG and 360-degree Reporting model for self-reflection

 The 360-degree application to the CAG takes the data regarding character to a new field with information being received from external sources for comparison to own thoughts and perceptions. Akin to the original format of the CAG, it is not without its biases. Personal bias can fester within the choice of who to receive feedback from and the quality of feedback which is received. Bias will exist within the information due to many variances within the outside source. A desire to maintain friendships, professional relationships; or the opposite, to

hurt or raise issues out of context - all these areas can be exploited through misuse of the 360-degree aspect for the CAG.

Though a concept which could dilute the individual biases is through a variances of sources. Rather than seeking 360-degree feedback from one source, the format can be designed to fit the scores from several other sources within the one CAG. In essence, the 360-degree reporting would represent a general opinion, rather than individual scrutiny. As such, trends can be confirmed and person biases diluted.

The aggregation of 360 degree reporting and self-assessments through the CAG bring the original format of the CAG to a greater degree of capability as a way of contextualising perceived character items and representing them within a tangible and fathomable format. It represents an ability to deeply engage in thought and reflection.

Conclusion

The journey that this research project was undertaken to understand the concept of character and the development of it to better the leadership of those that serve within the Army. It has reached a point of recommendations for trailing and refining. What has been ascertained is that the current doctrinal definition and approach to developing character within the Army is not completely flawed. Rather, it needs to evolve in its practical application to the contemporary Army setting.

The proposed definition is unique for service within Army which has been harvested from a variety of sources as to understand the full spectrum of influence on character relevant to the individuals that serve within the Army. This definition was then transformed into a process for individuals to seek analysis and deeper understanding of their character along the proposed definition to seek an awareness within a tangible format for reflection and identification of their variances. Finally, the adjusted filters allow the individual to work out the best methodologies for them to develop aspects of their character in which they deem require work as to better themselves as leaders and strengthen their own character in accordance with the definition that has been offered.

This process is unique to any other process that has been developed as it has aggregated academic work within the area of character and applied it to the context of Army. Though as has been discussed, this unique approach is a necessity for such a vague and broad subject to be developed fully within a clinical and controlled environment.

Recommendations

The next step in the development of this process is for testing in the contemporary setting. This will require the concepts to be floated within the intellectual sphere of Army senior leadership for acceptance and concurrence. Following this would then be further refinements from guidance received. The best test case for the CDT is within the lower levels of leadership within the Army. Such training institutions such as the Royal Military College – Duntroon and the Australian Defence Force Academy should be targeted for controlled and detailed testing whilst further tests should also be executed within the normal units of the Combat Brigades in the Army. The process in which derived the CDT will no doubt receive scrutiny and feedback from many sources which is welcomed academic rigour that will simply add to the robustness and depth from which the process can be further refined. The immediate goal is to make the organisation aware of a process to better its leaders – the next goal is to continue developing this process for future application and ongoing evolutions as the organisation grows and matures to accept the concepts discussed within this research project.

Appendix A

Character Item guidance. The information below is for the comprehension of each Character Item for use within the CDT. These are not definitions. Rather, they are concepts sourced from the wide range of research literature that came to form this project and have been adjusted to meet Army requirements.

Be:
- **Integrity** – Adhere to a moral or ethical code of standard. A person who consistently chooses to do the 'right thing' when faced with alternate choices.
- **Honesty** – Consistently being truthful with others.
- **Self-Discipline** – Able to control feelings and overcome perceived or real weaknesses
- **Spiritual appreciation** – Values the spiritual diversity amoung individuals with different backgrounds and cultures and respects all individuals' rights to differ from others in their beliefs.
- **Curiosity** – Driven towards a constant desire to know or learn something.
- **Love of learning** – Having a passionate interest in gaining knowledge about the world and one's place in it.
- **Ingenuity** – Possession of qualities inclusive of clever, original and inventive.
- **Wisdom** – Quality of having experience, knowledge and good judgement.
- **Persistence** – The drive to continue an opinion or course of action in spite of difficulty or opposition.
- **Prudence** – Good judgment that allows you to avoid danger or risk in decision making processes.
- **Humility** – The state or quality of not thinking you are better or more important than other people
- **Appreciation of Beauty** – Ability to find, recognise and take pleasure in the existence of goodness in the world.
- **Humour** – Quality of being amusing or comedic.
- **Initiative** – The ability to assess and initiate things independently.
- **Pragmatism** – A reasonable and logical way of doing things or thinking about problems that is based on dealing with specific situations instead of on ideas and theories.
- **Self-Awareness** – The conscious knowledge of your own character – feelings, motives and desires.

Know:
- **Loyalty** – Being devoted and committed to the organisation (Army), supervisors, peers and subordinates.
- **Empathy** – Ability to understand and share the feelings of another.
- **Selflessness** – Genuinely concerned about the welfare of others and willing to sacrifice your personal interest for others and their organisation.
- **Compassion** – Concern for the suffering or welfare of others and their organisation.
- **Respectfulness** – Show esteem for, and consideration and appreciation of others.

- **Social intelligence** – Ability to get along well with others, and to get them to cooperate with you.
- **Kindness** – The quality of being friendly, generous and considerate.
- **Teamwork** – Ability to effectively and efficiently combine and integrate within a group.
- **Gratitude** – The ability to show appreciation for and to return kindness.
- **Optimism** – Hopefulness and confidence about the future or success of something.
- **Forgiveness** – Action or process of forgiving someone or something.
- **Enthusiasm** – Intense and eager enjoyment, interest or approval.
- **Loving** – Feeling or showing love or great care.

<u>Do:</u>
- **Competency** – Ability to do something successfully or efficiently.
- **Decisiveness** – Having the power or quality of deciding.
- **Cooperativeness** – The degree to which you are generally agreeable in relations with other.
- **Good judgement** – Ability to form an opinion or decision that is based on careful thought which will not deteriorate the organisation (Army).
- **Bravery** – Quality that allows you to do things that are dangerous or frightening.
- **Fairness** – Treat people in an equitable, impartial and just manner.
- **Leadership** – The art of influencing and directing people to achieve willingly the team or organisational goal.
- **Courage** – Ability to do something that you know is difficult or dangerous.
- **Service to the nation** – Continuous commitment of self to the organisation regardless of place, time or company.
- **Moral Courage** – Ability to take action for moral reason despite the risk of adverse consequences.
- **Pursuit of excellence** – Constant practice and perseverance to increase yourself to an unusually good standard or to surpass ordinary standards.
- **Self-Control** – Ability to control yourself, especially in difficult situations.
- **Self-Discipline –** Consistent ability to control your feelings and overcome your weaknesses.

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