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CHANGING ROLE OF THE USAF NONCOMMISSIONED
OFFICER

By COLONEL WILLIAM P. KNUDSEN

AIR UNIVERSITY
UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE, ALABAMA

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CHANGING ROLE OF THE USAF
NONCOMMISSIONED OFFICER

by

William P. Knudsen
Colonel, USAF

A RESEARCH REPORT SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY

IN

FULFILLMENT OF THE RESEARCH

REQUIREMENT

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Bill Snyder
Technical Advisor: Colonel Ron Morey

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DISCLAIMER-ABSTAINER

TITLE: The Changing Role of the United States Air Force
            (USAF) Noncommissioned Officer (NCO)

AUTHOR: William P. Knudsen, Colonel, USAF

The purpose of this research report is to analyze,
evaluate, and determine the changing role of the USAF NCO
in the year 2000. The current role of the NCO is documented
as a frame of reference for noting change. The Megatrend
model is used to determine the national environment at the
turn of the century. The Air Force Project 2000 model is
used to establish the Air Force atmosphere in the year 2000.
The research reveals that the role of the 2000 NCO will
have a new emphasis and critical importance to the AF and
its ability to perform its mission.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Colonel William P. Knudsen is a Command Pilot with 3500 hours of flying time in C-130's and A-10's. He has been a fighter squadron operations officer and commander. He has had headquarters tours in Alaskan Command, Eighth Air Force, Strategic Air Command, North American Air Defense Command and United States Readiness Command. Colonel Knudsen is enrolled in the Troy State Master of Science in Personnel Management Program and a member of the Air War College class of 1987.

CHAPTER ONE

> By our everyday experience, stresses, and con-
> flicts, and by modern learning and mass media
> we are continuously reminded that we are living
> in a world characterized by rapid social and
> technological change. The multiple revolutions
> that typify the transition from an industrial
> to a post-industrial society make the need for
> coping with change a task for every human being,
> but particularly for those persons who provide
> leadership for the social systems of man.

<div align="right">Visualizing Change</div>

INTRODUCTION

Change was the inspiration for the study that led to
this report. The author chose to study and think about
change and Air Force (AF) Noncommissioned Officers (NCO)
in order to "...plan in advance for the impact of
change..." instead of waiting "...until change forces us
to react." (33:i)

The NCO Corps was selected because of the important
leadership and management role it performs in the AF.
AF Pamphlet (AFP) 50-34 states "the Air Force organization's
success or failure, its strength or weakness, is directly
proportionate to the effectiveness of its NCOs." (57:6-1)
The significant contribution of NCOs to the AF was also
expressed by General Robert T. Marsh, former Commander,
Air Force Systems Command. While discussing NCO jobs,
General Marsh stated they are "...essential management
positions of great responsibility...." (37:4-107)

The future role that the NCO will perform in the AF is the problem the author studied. The purpose of this report is to provide an answer. For the scope of the study the future was defined as the year 2000. The turn of the century was selected because the Air Force 2000 study (AF 2000) made "...a realistic assessment of the challenges likely to confront the Air Force at the turn of the century." (56:1) The AF 2000 realistic assessment provided a benchmark from which to determine the new roles that NCOs will be required to perform.

Another term that requires defining is Non-commissioned Officer. AF Regulation (AFR) 39-6, The Enlisted Force Organization, spells out the grades and specific responsibilities of NCOs:

> Briefly, the Air Force considers as noncommissioned officers airmen in the grade of sergeant, staff sergeant, technical sergeant, master sergeant, senior master sergeant, and chief master sergeant. These noncommissioned officers are selected from airmen who demonstrate a capability to lead and influence other airmen. (59:2)

Within the AF, it is customary for NCOs to also have a continuing responsibility, on and off duty, for individual and group morale and esprit de corps. (59:2)

For the future role study, the author elected to consider the top four NCO ranks of Chief Master Sergeant (CMSgt), Senior Master Sergeant (SMSgt), Master Sergeant (MSgt), and Technical Sergeant (TSgt). General and specific NCO responsibilities for each of the four ranks

will be covered in Chapter Two. However, the four ranks

selected have significant supervisory responsibilities

and thus will be affected by and have a major effect

on the A⁻ as future change occurs.

The author's hypothesis is that the AF NCO at the

turn of century will perform basically the same role

as he does today. The specific "tools" used may change;

however, the roles of leader, manager, supervisor, and

technician will remain unchanged. It is possible the

author's research may reveal a new or different role for

the AF NCO in the year 2000.

As documented earlier, the NCO performs a significant

role in the Air Force. How the NCO performs in the future

will, to large extent, reflect how the Air Force will

perform its mission. The Air Force has significant

responsibilities to the people of the United States.

For example:

> It is the intent of Congress to provide an Air
> Force that is capable, in conjunction with other
> armed forces, of preserving the peace and security,
> and providing for the defense of the United States,
> the territories, commonwealths, and possessions
> and any areas occupied by the United States; sup-
> porting the national policies; implementing the
> national objectives; and overcoming any nations
> responsible for aggressive acts that imperil the
> peace and security of the United States. (58:1-1)

Thus, planning in advance for the impact of change on the

NCO Corps is important for the Air Force and the fulfillment

of its responsibilities.

The author selected two future oriented models to

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frame the role of the AF NCO in the year 2000. First, the changes that society might experience are important; the Air Force is dynamically influenced, as are all U.S. organizations, by the pressures, directions, and changes within the American society. John Naisbitt's Megatrends will be used to briefly describe the environment the AF could be functioning within at the turn of the century.

The second study, the Air Force 2000 study: Air Power Entering the 21st Century, is pertinent because it addresses specific challenges likely to confront the Air Force in the future. These challenges are tied directly to the AF mission and thus provide specific activities the NCO of the future will deal with.

This report is divided into six chapters. Chapter one has introduced the problem. Chapter two discusses the current role of the AF NCO. Chapter three addresses the trends that might be prevalent in the United States in which the AF will exist at the turn of the century. Chapter four studies the AF challenges in the year 2000. Chapter five forecasts what roles the AF NCO may be required to perform in 2000. Chapter six provides an epilogue to the report.

Limitations of the Study

This study cannot present a clear view of the future or a flawless checklist which will prepare NCOs for the year 2000 and beyond.

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"...The word sergeant comes from the Latin word
servire, meaning to serve." (16:1-44)

THE CURRENT ROLE OF THE AIR FORCE
NONCOMMISSIONED OFFICER

"The Air Force organization's success or failure, its
strength or weakness, is directly proportionate to the
effectiveness of its NCOs." This statement from AFP 50-34
places significant responsibility on the NCO Corps.
However, there is a perception in the AF that an NCO's
primary responsibility is as a technician.

The perception that all NCOs are primarily skilled
specialists is a result of World War II (WWII). (59:1)
As Martin Binkin documented in Military Technology and
Defense Manpower, WWII was accompanied by a significant
increase in complex weapons and support systems.

The new equipment significantly altered the requirement
within the military for technical specialists. When WWII
ended only 39 percent of army troops held "ground combat"
jobs. "The remaining personnel performed a wide range of
support jobs, which, in addition to the traditional services
and craft occupations, included specialists associated with
communications, radar, and fire control equipment...." (8:5)

This Army and Army Air Corps trend continued during
the post-war years. Generally, AF NCOs were required to

perform the role of technician rather than the role of

enlisted leader. (59:1) As the newly formed AF matured

and marked technological advances occurred in nuclear

weapons and modern electronics, senior AF leaders "...became

aware of the need for better supervision and control over

enlisted personnel than was being provided by the available

commissioned officers." (59:2) The NCO was the logical

choice to provide supervision for subordinates, while

continuing to provide technical training. (59:1) This

shift in NCO responsibilities from technical to more

supervisory duties is not an absolute change. It is more

an introduction of expanded supervisory responsibilities.

In the AF, since WWII, the percentage of technical

jobs in the military's enlisted ranks is almost twice as

large as the proportion of technical jobs in the entire

civilian economy. (8:9) However, the trend is similar

in the civilian and military sector. That is, a growing

percentage of both labor forces are grouped in the technical

and craftsmen skills. Martin Binkin points out in Military

Technology and Defense Manpower that, as AF jobs become

more technical, the tasks in each job become more complex,

and the people, airmen, performing these jobs must be more

highly qualified. (8:10) The NCO must maintain his

technical qualifications and expertise. But, he must also

be able to manage, supervise, and lead.

While technical expertise is a major skill requirement

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for junior NCOs, senior NCOs have leadership and managerial

responsibilities. The specific responsibilities of the

top three NCOs are:

>The supervisor-manager NCOs are CMSgt, SMSgt, and
>MSgt and are considered senior NCOs. They must
>affectively apply all available resources to achieve
>the mission. Although thoroughly trained in the
>technical aspects of their specialities, they are
>leaders and managers with supervisory responsi-
>bilities, not supergrade technicians. (57:6-4)

Senior NCOs may serve as chief of a section or a

branch and must ensure their personnel are technically

trained and qualified. Senior NCOs must also "...take the

lead in achieving, maintaining, and enforcing Air Force

standards as well as the standards relating to good order

and discipline." (57:6-4)

The fourth NCO rank discussed in this study is the

TSgt, or technical supervisor. In addition to general

NCO responsibilities, the TSgt has the following specific

duties:

>To perform complex technical duties in addition
>to providing responsible supervision. They are
>responsible for developing enlisted personnel
>under their supervision. They must obtain maxi-
>mum performance from each subordinate and ensure
>that the product or service is of the quality
>necessary for total mission effectiveness. (57:6-4)

The TSgt is thus one of the important technician-supervisor

NCOs who are the critical first-line supervisors in the AF.

A significant part of the NCO leadership role is to

interact with airmen and junior NCOs. According to AFP

50-34, "The NCO, by virtue of knowledge and experience,

is the logical person to conduct both specialized and general training." (57:6-2) The NCO is the first-line supervisor who sets the AF standards.

The trend that started in the post-war years that witnessed NCOs performing duties previously reserved by officers is increasing. (8:5) The theme that NCOs today perform duties previously reserved for officers is also stressed by Mr. Bruce D. Callendar, former editor of the AF Times, when he wrote: "Today, NCOs in the top tier fill many slots that once were considered officer billets." (12:176) A further reflection of the increased quality of the NCO is illustrated in Table 2-1.

EDUCATIONAL LEVELS OF AF OFFICERS
AND AIRMEN FOR 1957 AND 1986

| | 1957 | | 1986 |
	Officer	Airmen	Airmen
high school graduate	12.4	56.9	approx 90
college (two years or more, no degree)	25.0	3.7	approx 35
college degree/equivalent	35.9	0.5	approx 20
master's degree	4.7	.02	approx .02

TABLE 2-1   (16:1-44)

Today's NCO Corps has approximately the same educational level that the officer corps had in 1957. The trend depicted in Table 2-1 is continuing. Retired Chief Master Sergeant of the AF (CMSAF) James M. McCoy stated in 1985 that the "heavy enrollment in off-duty education programs...is a prime example of how today's NCOs want to become better

leaders and want to become better informed of what's going on in the world around them." (35:143)

Retired Chief Master Sergeant of the AF Sam E. Parish stated "the long-held military tradition that the officer provides leadership and the noncommissioned officer takes care of technical details is dead, as far as the Air Force is concerned." (35:143) His and the Air Force's bottom line on NCO responsibility is "real and direct leadership rests with NCOs." (35:143)

The trend of NCOs performing jobs previously held by officers will most likely continue at an accelerated pace. According to the February 9, 1987, issue of the "Air Force Times," Secretary of Defense Casper W. Weinberger has decided that, due to congressional action, the Air Force would have to reduce its officer corps by 1,300 personnel during fiscal year (FY) 87. This figure represents the AF share of approximately 1% of the Department of Defense (DOD) Officer Corps. Further, mandatory cuts for the DOD Officer Corps would be 2% in FY 88 and 3% in FY 89. According to Maj Gen Winfield Harpe, USAF the AF share could total approximately 6,500 officers for FYs 87, 88, and 89. (11:1&24) The reduction of approximately 6,500 AF officers during the next three years will ensure that the trend of capable NCOs assuming increased responsibilities in jobs previously performed by officers will continue.

Former CMSAF Arthur "Bud" Andrews has continually

stated that NCOs "...must seek and assume greater re-
sponsibilities inherent in assuming officer jobs." (2:82)
Chief Andrews believes NCOs must place emphasis on leadership
and management. Andrews' emphasis also contained a caution.
He stressed that NCOs are leaders first, but they must
also understand the principles of management.

The emphasis on leadership and acceptance of re-
sponsibility is also encouraged at the USAF Senior NCO
Academy at Gunter AFS, Alabama. At the Academy:

> The courses are designed to place Air Force Senior
> Noncommissioned Officers firmly in stride with the
> Service's Officer Corps and sharpen the leadership
> and management skills they must have to supervise
> junior enlisted members and middle-management
> NCOs. (26:8)

During the author's interview with the Commandant of the
USAF Senior NCO Academy, CMSgt Frank T. Guidas, Jr. rein-
forced the importance of leadership and management training
for senior NCOs along with a strong focus on communication
skills. (29:--)

The skills learned in NCO Professional Military
Education (PME) prepare the NCO for his role in the AF.
As the AF first-line supervisor, the NCO performs a
critical role with individual airmen. The NCO is a role
model. Discipline and enforcement of standards are also
NCO duties that are critical to the fabric of every
organization within the Air Force.

In summary, today's AF NCOs are expected to be proficient
in their technical and manual skills. But, today's AF NCO

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also has significant leadership and management respon-
sibilities that are critical to the mission of the Air
Force. Today's AF NCO performs duties previously performed
by commissioned officers. And, today's AF NCO is the key
first-line supervisor responsible for educating today's
airmen in technical and manual skills as well as in AF
standards and discipline.

This chapter established the foundation of what
the current role of the AF NCO is. In Chapter 3 the author
introduces the **Megatrend** model in order to provide a
framework of how American society may impact on the role
of the AF NCO at the turn of the century.

CHAPTER THREE

> In a world of accelerant change, next year is nearer
> to us than next month was in a more leisurely era.
> This radically altered fact of life must be in-
> ternalized by decision-makers in industry, government
> and elsewhere. Their time horizons must be extended.

                                            Future Shock

FUTURE TRENDS FOR THE UNITED STATES

It is not possible to predict the future with certainty.
However, it is possible through historical research and
detailed analysis of emerging trends to chart the general
direction the future may take. An example of this type
of analysis is the John Naisbitt book Megatrends.

Megatrends interprets ten trends...or megatrends...
because of their significance for American society. All
ten trends, if accurate, tell us the direction the country
is moving. The direction is not a clear road map. Rather,
it provides a frame of reference in which to think-specu-
late-plan-imagine what needs to be accomplished in order
to be ready for the challenges of the future.

Naisbitt's ten megatrends are (1) industrial society
to an information society (2) forced technology to high
tech/high touch (3) national economy to a world economy
(4) short term to long term planning (5) centralized to
decentralized (6) institutional help to self-help (7) re-
presentative democracy to participatory democracy

(8) hierarchies to networking (9) north to south migration
(10) either/or to multiple options. Possible ways each of
these trends will impact on the role of the NCO will now
be discussed.

The first megatrend, the movement from an industrial
society to an information society, has been occurring for
over 30 years. "In 1956, for the first time in American
history, white collar workers in technical, managerial,
and clerical positions outnumbered blue-collar workers."
(41:12) As a trend, we can see the American society
mass-producing information in the same manner that heavy
industries mass-produced in the past. A similar trend
is evident in the Air Force.

In 1973, the Air Force leased or operated 1,300
general purpose computers worth $866 million. Ten years
later, the AF was the government's single largest user of
computers. That same year, the AF budgeted $647 million
just to replace its base level computers. (41:148-149)
The trend toward an information society places renewed
emphasis on the need for reading and writing skills.

In addition to the need for literacy, the rapid
growth of technology will require extensive retraining.
Martin Binkin, in Military Technology and Jobs Skills,
documented that not only will the number of technical
jobs increase in the future, but the technical complexity
of specific jobs will also grow. Binkin's technical

complexity example relates that the percentage of clerical

positions has remained relatively the same; however, the

clerks filling the clerical positions now must have data

processing skills.

The trend toward an increased number of technical

jobs and the technical complexity of specific jobs is

predicted to continue. The Air Force 2000 study concluded:

> The expanded operational environment of the future
> will create an increased demand for people in com-
> mand, control, and communications, in electronic
> warfare, in computer-assisted design/manufacturing,
> and in space operations. Although automation and
> "Black box technology" will continue to offset
> some task complexity, an intensified need for more
> technically trained workers to operate and main-
> tain complex systems is inevitable. (56:253)

The AF 2000 Study conclusion, when combined with Binkin's

view of the complexity of specific jobs, has a possible

significant impact on the Air Force. The possibility is

that a group of jobs clustered by level of technical

difficulty and advances in technology may require a more

qualified work force. "Thus even if the number of elec-

tronic jobs remained fairly constant, those jobs arguably

could be more demanding and require individuals with a

higher degree of proficiency." (8:39)

The increase in technical jobs and complexity of jobs

is a concern of senior AF leaders. Secretary of the Air

Force Verne Orr stated in Air Force magazine:

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...The requirement for a scientifically literate
citizenry, able to master the implications of the
new technologies, grows ever more important. In-
deed, our nation's very technological advantage
in defense and the future ability of our economy
to compete in world markets may eventually be at
stake.

...The declining ability of American young people
to handle math and science will handicap the
technology-oriented Air Force of tomorrow unless
action is taken today. (36:73)

The AF NCO will be the supervisor who must train,

and with the rapid advances in information systems and

military technologies, retrain the junior NCOs and airmen.

The training task is a large process in the AF. The

technical training requirement for the enlisted force

in 1986 was 268,000 airmen and NCOs. (1:--) This figure

does not include on-the-job training and retraining on

new equipment. The training responsibilities of the NCO

will be complicated by a reality of today: the declining

trend in the American education system.

In 1982, 23 million Americans, 1 in 5 adults, lacked

the reading and writing skills needed to cope with the

basic demands of daily living. Another 30 million

Americans are marginally capable of being productive

workers, while thirteen percent of high school graduates

have only sixth grade reading and writing skills. (61:53)

Today, the level of education desired in America

for the general population is described as "functional

literacy." This refers to the reading and writing skills

needed to participate in a society of increasingly complex

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tasks. Recent studies indicate that functional

illiteracy is spreading. For example:

>A person now needs to read at a sixth grade level
>to understand a driver's license manual, at an
>eighth grade level to follow the directions for
>preparing a TV dinner or to read a federal income
>tax form, at a 10th grade level to interpret the
>instructions on an aspirin bottle, at a 12th
>grade level to understand an insurance policy,
>and at college level to figure out the meaning
>of an apartment lease. By those measurements,
>say experts, more than help the adult population
>could be considered functionally illiterate,
>depending on the task. (61:54)

The significance of functional illiteracy was rein-

forced by the following statement from the director of

education for the AFL CIO: "By the 1990s anyone who

does not have at least a 12th grade reading, writing

and calculating level will be absolutely lost." (61:54)

Functional illiteracy in the United States is highest

among minorities. Functional illiteracy for whites is

sixteen percent, compared to fifty-six percent for

Hispanics and forty-four percent of blacks. A final

trend indicates that women are more likely to be functionally

illiterate than men, and a higher proportion of illiterates

are likely to be residents of rural areas. (61:51-55)

According to a 1982 US News and World Report article,

the number of illiterates in America is steadily mounting.

The increase is linked to nearly 1 million school dropouts

a year and also to immigrants from Latin America and Asia,

many of whom are unable to read or write in English or

their own language. (61:53) The NCO at the turn of the

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century may have to train an increasing number of functionally lower capable airmen for increasing technical jobs and increasing complexity within jobs.

The second megatrend that Naisbitt offers is "forced technology - high tech/high touch." This movement translates into the need for more human touch as technology is forced on the American society. As the society becomes more involved in technological advances-- in the workplace and in the home--there is a greater need for personal contact or in Naisbitt's words, "high touch."

A recent Business Week article, "Management Discovers the Human Side of Automation," relates that technological improvements alone do not increase productivity. The main point of the article is that workers are required who, working in small groups (high touch), desire challenging jobs and seek responsibility. These workers will have to be multiskilled, combine doing and thinking on the job and prefer small autonomous work groups. (28:71) This trend in the civilian work force is significant when combined with the fact that "...the percentage of technical jobs in the military's enlisted ranks is almost twice as large as the proportion of technical jobs in the entire civilian economy." (8:9)

The NCO will be involved daily in the changes that technology will bring. The NCO will have to help the airmen and DOD civilian workers adjust to change. The

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"high touch" required will demand the NCO be adaptable to change and aware of the pressures placed on his subordinates...and the human, personal attention they will need.

A world economy replacing a national economy is the third trend. This shift has two important influences on the environment the NCO will have to lead and manage in: first, the interdependence that will be forced on the U.S. with the trend from national to a world economy, and second, a society that is no longer the world's dominant force, but part of a growing number of economically strong countries. (41:57)

For the NCO in the year 2000 this will result in an AF environment where some equipment, software, training devices and institutional trends could be from other countries. It may be difficult for the airmen and DOD civilians to adjust to this situation. The NCO will be the first-line supervisor who will have to accommodate to the change.

The next trend is a shift from short-term considerations and rewards to an acceptance of thinking and doing things in much longer time frames. In the business world, this will be a shift from short-term profit to long-range growth and increases in productivity. In the Air Force it will be a shift from a two year budget cycle to a vision of the future.

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History provides many examples of the importance

of vision. For the military, trends have a national

defense siginificance: horse to tank, battleship to air-

craft carrier, and artillery to missiles. Historical

trends have started at the grass roots level of society

and worked upward. (41:3) The NCO as the AF first-line

supervisor will be the "nerve endings" of AF leadership

and must be ready to see, understand, and help focus on

the new trends.

The move from centralization to decentralization is

the fifth megatrend. This growth of decentralization

is related to the shift from an industrial society to

an information society. According to Naisbitt:

> America's industrial machine was probably history's
> greatest centralizing force. The mechanical blue-
> print of industrial society required enormous
> centralization--in labor, material, capital, and
> plant. This is because mass industrialization was
> organized according to the principles of economies
> of scale, that is, the more you produce in one
> place, in one way, the cheaper each individual
> unit will be. (41:98)

The AF has in the past also emphasized centralization.

The January, 1987 issue of INC magazine features an article

on how Gen William L. Creech (USAF/Ret.) dramatically in-

creased Tactical Air Command (TAC) combat readiness through

decentralization. General Creech's decentralization

philosophy, simply stated, is "things are achieved by

individuals, by collections of twos and fives and twenties,

not collections of 115,000. And that's as true in industry

as it is in the military." (20:51) Whether the thrust

is on saving money or increasing combat readiness, General

Creech believes the thrust is on people. The AF leader

who is the focal point of the "twos and fives, and

twenties" is the NCO. This philosophy is shared by the

Chief of Staff of the Air Force, General Larry D. Welch.

He stresses that decisions and responsibility must be

decentralized from higher headquarters, when possible,

to the first line supervisors who are daily making

decisions. (1:--) General Welch believes with decen-

tralization goes accountability for actions and decisions.

The NCO will be more and more accountable as the AF

program for decentralization continues.

Other experts have expressed the "excitement" that

decentralization can bring to workers and managers and

leaders. One such expert is John W. Gardner, a contributor

to the Leadership Studies Program. In an article entitled

"The Moral Aspect of Leadership", Gardner stated:

> We need leaders in our organizations and in the
> nation who can bring alive the whole down-the-
> line network of individuals with that kind of
> capacity to share the leadership task. Such a
> network will enliven and strengthen our society
> at every level. Problems visible only at lower
> levels (or solvable only at those levels) will
> be seen and solved there. In the case of pro-
> blems solvable only at a higher level the search
> for solutions at that level will be facilitated
> by the availability of grassroots diagnosis. (22:18)

As the future unfolds, the NCO will be part of the

change and innovation in a decentralized society and AF.

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The NCO's leadership and management expertise will be the tools that unlock the potential of the airmen and DOD civilians at the turn of the century.

The sixth trend of institutional help to self help is a trend away from relying on government and other institutions to a more traditional American value of self-reliance. As Naisbitt relates, for decades institutions in America, such as government, corporations, and the school system, were buffers against life's hard realities. The needs that were satisfied included food, housing, health care, and education. Slowly during the 1970's, Americans began to disengage from the institutions that had disillusioned them and began to relearn the desirability of doing things on their own. In a sense, America has "...come full circle. We are reclaiming America's traditional sense of self-reliance after four decades of trusting in institutional help." (41:131)

The AF NCO will be involved daily in a self-help society with the airmen and DOD civilians he/she supervises. The AF has a tradition of "look after its own" AF units view themselves as families. Thus, the societal trend of self-help is a move toward an AF society norm. However, the NCO will have increasingly complex problems to help his/her people solve. As Alvin Toffler's Future Shock predicts, "...millions of ordinary, psychologically normal people will face an abrupt collision with the future...

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many of them will find it increasingly painful to keep up with the incessant demand for change..." (54:8) The NCO will be the leader who will have to deal with the emotional highs and lows of the airmen, DOD civilians and their families as they face the demands of change.

The next trend, from a representative to a participatory democracy, is more than just an involvement in the governmental process. It is a basic movement toward more actively participating in decisions that effect one's life. Within the civilian business and political arena, according to Naisbitt, "leadership involves finding a parade and getting in front of it; what is happening in America is that those parades are getting smaller and smaller--and there are many more of them." (41:162)

This trend is documented in America today and it is called participatory management. This approach stresses responsibility among all employees and encourages them to participate directly in decisions that relate to work. (48:69) This system does not take away a leader's responsibilities; instead it enables the leader to be a facilitator in the process of change by being a channel for innovative ideas from the workers.

The NCOs will still make decisions and give orders. However, the decisions and orders will be based on information and ideas from the doers...the airmen and DOD civilians.

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The eighth trend is a move away from hierarchies to networking. According to Naisbitt, simply stated, "...networks are people talking to each other, sharing ideas, information, and resources." (41:192) Hierarchies remain; however, America's belief in their efficiency does not. The failure of hierarchies to solve America's social, business, and political problems forced people to talk to one another--and that was the beginning of networks. (41:191) The importance of networking is not the network itself or the finished product, but rather the sharing of information between people and groups of people. (60:101)

Networking will impact on the NCOs of the future. NCOs can network with each other in order to share problems and solutions to their jobs and to the people aspects of their jobs. Also, with the understanding that the first-line supervisors have current information on specific aspects of the AF mission, line and supervisory NCOs may be networked by senior leaders for information and/or ideas.

Reinforced by the 1980 census, Naisbitt next discusses the North-South trend--or the trend that for the first time in the history of America there are more people in the West and South than in the North and East. The possible effects this trend might have on the NCOs of the year 2000 are significant.

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One impact could be a lack of jobs for military
and family members at AF bases in areas of stagnant or
declining growth. The quality of life of airmen and
their families could suffer from low quality schools and
lack of extracurricular activities sponsored by the local
community in areas of declining growth. On the other
hand, the NCO at an AF base in a rapidly expanding area
could face problems associated with a limited supply
of affordable housing and overcrowded schools.

The final megatrend is a move away from an either/or
to a multiple options era. Naisbitt uses the analogy of
a "Baskin-Robins Society" --that is everything comes in
at least 31 flavors. (41:232) Across American society,
the desire for multiple options is redefining the way
people work, the hours worked and the recreational
activities available. Specific examples include quality
work circles; full-time, two-career-family employees;
job-sharing; job-splitting; and a dramatic increase in
leisure time specialty services such as jazzercise.

The NCO at the turn of the century will lead airmen
and DOD civilians that live and have matured in a
multiple choice world. The challenge to the NCO in a
multiple choice future will be to constantly attempt to
rid his/her thinking of preconceived beliefs, biases,
thinking ruts, and unchallenged assumptions in order to
lead from a changing present to an uncertain future. (48:40)

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In summary, the megatrend model reflects that today's NCO is living in a "...time between eras." America has not fully moved on from a centralized, industrialized and economically self-contained society. The NCO at the turn of the century will be part of the future.

That future will include a move to an information society with a population shift to the Southwest. Americans will participate increasingly more in government, business and social decisions. This move to decentralization of authority will be accompanied by an increased self-awareness and self-reliance by the American public. Megatrends provided a frame of reference for the direction of change within the American society. The next chapter focuses on a roadmap of future change for the AF.

CHAPTER FOUR

> It is a fundamental premise of this study that we
> have entered a period of profound political, eco-
> nomic and technological change calling for
> adjustment within our military establishment.
> Problems that could in past years be coveniently
> postponed now demand immediate attention.
>
> AF 2000 Study

AIR FORCE CHALLENGES IN THE YEAR 2000

The purpose of the AF 2000 study was to make a

realistic assessment of the challenges likely to confront

the Air Force at the turn of the century. The study

focussed on seven important issues: war-fighting

perspective, leadership and military values, compensation,

manpower requirements, recruiting, training, and retention.

Each of these issues in the AF 2000 model will be discussed

in detail.

The first issue is the war-fighting perspective. The

AF 2000 stated:

> Reliance on technology, in the relative security
> of a peacetime setting, has not only depersonalized
> war, but also has served to fragment traditional
> military values by placing more emphasis on the
> individual. These factors have diluted the generally
> perceived importance of leadership, rank, and combat
> experience. The most significant and decisive im-
> pact of the gradual shift away from a war-fighting,
> mission orientation has been the loss of the per-
> ception that success in battle ultimately depends
> on trained, dedicated, and motivated people. (56:268)

This trend is evident in most AF wings. A typical

Air Force flying wing has four to five thousand military and

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DOD civilian personnel, but only 300 to 400 aircrew members
would be directly involved in fighting the enemy.   The AF
2000 study stated that:

> Although formal programs certainly help, a true
> war-fighting spirit and sense of purpose will
> evolve only through a re-emphasis of unit co-
> hesion, pride, and spirit together with a
> renewed appreciation for the basic military
> values of leadership, team work, positive dis-
> cipline, and a selfless dedication to duty to
> one's country. (56:269)

This AF direction to maintain a war-fighting spirit
has considerable implications when one thinks about an
NCO's responsibilities for supervising airmen and DOD
civilians.   As the AF first-line supervisor, the AF NCO
of the future will be daily emphasizing unit cohesion,
pride, and spirit and instilling the values of team work,
discipline, and dedication.

The second 2000 issue is leadership and institutional
values.   Morris Janowitz, in The Professional Soldier:
A Social and Political Portrait, stated, "The impact
of technological developments during the last half-century
has had the consequence of "civilianizing" the military
profession and of blurring the distinction between the
civilian and the military." (30:2-18) The "civilianizing"
of the military has been viewed as a shift from a "military
institution" to a civilian-like occupation.   According
to Charles C. Moskos, Jr.:

An institution is legitimated in terms of values
and norms, that is, a purpose transcending indi-
vidual self-interest in favor of a presumed higher
good. Members of an institution are often viewed
as following a calling; they generally regard
themselves as being different or apart from the
broader society and are so regarded by others.
(39:1-118)

Moskos defines an occupation as: "legitimated in

terms of the market place, that is, prevailing monetary

rewards for equivalent competencies." (39:1-19) Moskos

and other writers point out that in reality the Armed

Forces have had and will most likely continue to have

elements of both institutional and occupational

characteristics. Moskos described a "pluralistic military

in which some parts are divergent and others convergent

with respect to civilian society." (32:1-10) As the

AF 2000 study states, the goal is to maintain as many of

the "institutional" characteristics of the AF as possible

while trying to limit the movement toward "occupational"

values.

The NCO at the turn of the century will be the

"maintainer" and the reinforcer of the institutional

values of the AF. The NCO will be responsible for

transmitting to the airmen and DOD civilians the essential

and enduring values of the military institution. As

documented in AF 2000 study, the four essential and

enduring values in the military institution are:

(1) Loyalty to the Institution. The Air Force
exists solely to serve and defend the nation.
To achieve that goal, members must direct their
loyalties upward through the chain of command,
accept as proper their constitutional accounta-
bility to civilian control, and agree to adhere
to the spirit and letter of lawful orders. They
commit themselves to work individually and col-
lectively toward institutional goals, and remain
obedient and disciplined even in the face of
difficulty or danger.

(2) Loyalty to Unit. In demonstrating loyalty
to the institution, Air Force members must also
demonstrate a reciprocal loyalty, a two-way
obligation, between those who lead and those who
are led. They must consider the welfare of their
comrades, recognize the necessity for mutual
dependence, and strive for the cohesiveness and
loyalty that mold individuals into effective
fighting organizations.

(3) Personal Responsibility. As elements of
fighting organizations, individual members incur
the obligation to accomplish all assigned tasks
to fulfill all commitments to their comrades, and
to actively work toward strengthening their
individual capabilities. The members incur the
further obligation of accepting full responsibility
for the actions of those they command or supervise.

(4) Selfless Service. In a profession where life
is ultimately at stake, there can be little
tolerance for motives of self-interest or personal
gain. Each individual must subordinate desires
for self-interest and self-aggrandizement to the
larger goals of mission accomplishment, unit
spirit, and sacrifice. Service in the military
requires teamwork in its fullest and most literal
sense -- teamwork that unfailingly emphasizes the
collective and greater good of the institution.
(56:271)

The third issue is compensation. "Military compen-

sation is one of the most important factors affecting the

Air Force's ability to meet manpower requirements needed

to operate, maintain, and support the AF of today and in

the future." (56:274) The NCO will perform an important

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role for the AF in the area of compensation. Specifically,
the NCO will be responsible for keeping the "troops"
informed of the initiatives of senior AF leadership to
maintain predictable, comparable and stable compensation.
The NCO will also provide important feedback on the com-
pensation needs and desires of the airmen and DOD civilians
to the senior AF leadership.

Compensation is important because it pervades all
aspects of AF life--and the NCO as the first-line
supervisor will be most personally involved in discussing
this issue with AF men and women.

The next 2000 issue is manpower requirements. As the
study points out, "...increasing sophistication of tech-
nology will be a fundamental element driving manpower
requirements in the future." (56:277) There are many
pressures that will affect the manpower pool the NCO of
the future will work with, such as: (1) Due to demo-
graphic patterns, America is "aging" and there will be
a sharp decline in the number of youths in the labor
force. (7:vii) The decline in size of the 16 to 24
year old age group will increase the competition for young
workers between the civilian sector and the military.
(2) "Women will account for 60% of the total growth in
the labor supply to 1995. This reflects both growth in
the female population and their increased participation
and their increased rate of participation in the work

force." (50:118) The NCO of the future will have to
understand the collision of two powerful social forces.
One is the push for women's equal rights, the other the
deeply rooted traditions that question the propriety of
women under arms. (9:109) (3) Blacks in the military:
"The 410,000 blacks under arms in 1981 represent about 20
percent of all military personnel, a proportion far
greater than the 11 or 12 percent of the total population
that is black." (5:vii) One study, Blacks and the
Military, contends that as the number of young Americans
declines, blacks will constitute an increasing proportion
of the smaller supply pool. Due to economics, many blacks
may find military service even more inviting than in the
past. (5:157) "Manning the armed forces with a repre-
sentative cross section of American society would be no
mean task." (5:157) The NCO will have to lead in this
environment. (4) Military as a married institution:
"One can estimate that the U.S. military has gone from
being 35 percent married in the 1950s to being approxi-
mately 60 percent married in the 1980s." (36:1-91)
Studies have shown that 67 percent of enlisted men's
wives work at least part time. The NCO will have to
adjust to this increasing trend. (5) In the future the
AF will have "...an intensified need for more technically
trained workers to operate and maintain complex systems."
(9:253) This AF requirement exists in the environment

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quoted below from a National Science Foundation study:

> We appear to be raising a generation of Americans, many of whom lack the understanding and the skills necessary to participate fully in the technological world in which they live and work. (53:70)

The implication for the military is clear, as Martin Binkin explains in Military Technology and Defense:

> It means that a smaller proportion of prospective volunteers possess the background to be trained in technical skills that are becoming increasingly desirable for a range of military jobs. On top of this, the youth pool will be shrinking in size as the "baby bust" runs its course, and its composition will be changing as disadvantaged social groups, traditionally with lower aptitude scores for technical training, constitute a larger proportion of the youth population. (8:74)

The AF NCO at the turn of the century will be training these people.

The fifth issue is recruiting. By 1995, 55 percent of the "qualified and available" male youth population will have to enlist if the active and reserve forces are to meet projected recruit requirements. (10:90) Recruitment will be indirectly affected by the NCOs of the year 2000.

The NCO in his daily leadership role could positively influence airmen and DOD civilians on the desirability of service to the United States in the AF. The airmen and DOD civilians could then "network" with "available and qualified" youth to choose service to country through the Air Force. (NOTE: Page 116 of the All-Volunteer Force After a Decade points out that "available and

qualified" excludes college students beyond their second year and women.) (10:115-116)

Training is the next 2000 study issue. The AF 2000 study stated:

> Rapidly changing technology and the rapidly de-
> creasing currency of technical skills will require
> a shift to a more broadly trained generalists and
> require more refresher training, continuing
> education, and retraining." (56:283)

The requirement for refresher training and retraining was addressed by General John W. Roberts (USAF/Ret) in The All-Volunteer Force After a Decade:

> ...OJT (on the job training) can be an extremely
> "high-cost" option because it requires the indi-
> vidual unit to utilize its most experienced
> personnel for the training function, while at the
> same time drawing NCO experience away from the
> primary unit mission, with a possible negative
> impact on overall unit readiness." (10:158)

The AF 2000 study states "the greatest challenge to Air Force training will be, as always, to provide the degree of military, technical, and operational training necessary to ensure success in combat." (56:284) The NCO of the future will be intimately involved in training the force.

Retention is the last issue. The AF 2000 study states:

> Future conflicts will not allow long lead times in
> which to mobilize and train a force. The retention
> of trained and experienced people will thus be one
> of the crucial readiness challenges for the future.
> (56:286)

A paper by C. Robert Roll, Jr., and John T. Warner entitled "The Enlisted Career Manpower in the All-Volunteer Force"

revealed some first term enlisted retention trends that
will impact on the future role of NCOs. (10:52) Roll
and Warner's findings indicate:

(1) Higher mental group personnel and more highly
educated personnel re-enlist at a lower rate than others.

(2) Married personnel re-enlist at a higher rate
than single personnel.

(3) Nonwhites re-enlist at a somewhat higher rate
than whites.

Roll and Warner also examined two studies on the
effect of service-specific factors (i.e., which branch
of the service is selected) on retention. Their findings
indicate that:

> Taken together, these studies suggest that the
> retention effects of service-specific factors are
> minor relative to the impact of changes in pay
> and unemployment. Further, they suggest that the
> services are not likely to be able to improve re-
> tention rates significantly by altering such factors
> as the extent of sea duty or the length of over-
> seas tours, at least not within the feasible range
> of adjustment of these controls. The major policy
> implication of this research is that the compen-
> sation system is, and will remain, the major tool
> for controlling retention. (10:62)

A conclusion that was reached was that certain "random
components" influencing retention rates do exist. These
random components incorporate certain factors that are
difficult to measure such as morale, leadership, public
attitudes toward military service, and involvement in a
popular or unpopular war. (10:62) While the above studies
conclude that pay and the unemployment climate of the

national economy are the two most significant retention variables, the role of the NCO as a leader in the "random component" area could be a deciding factor on the retention of quality airmen and DOD civilians.

Charles Moskos has expressed concern with a retention or recruitment program that emphasizes pay or cash inducements has filled the armed forces with "too many deprived youths, many with dependents, who view the military in terms of an occupation rather than a calling." (4:59) If Moskos is correct that pay and cash inducements are attracting occupationally motivated individuals who serve primarily for compensation, then the future NCO will be challenged to instill and maintain the "institution/calling" motivation of service to country over self interest.

In summary, through the year 2000 the AF will be influenced by dynamic social, economic, demographic and technological trends that will alter the way the mission is performed. At the same time the AF will be pressured by continued constaints on people, money, and resources. (56:290)

As the AF moves toward the 21st century, the AF 2000 study places great importance on instilling a warfighting orientation, developing strong and dynamic leadership, and perpetuating institutional values. The NCO at the turn of the century will perform a significant

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role implementing the recommendations in the AF 2000 study.

The <u>Megatrends</u> model and the <u>Air Force 2000</u> model provided the framework within which the NCO at the turn of the century will serve. In chapter five, the results of the view into the future and the role the NCO will perform are presented.

CHAPTER FIVE

The culture shock phenomenon accounts for much
of the bewilderment, frustration, and disorientation
that plagues Americans in their dealings with other
societies.   It causes a breakdown in communication,
a misreading of reality, an inability to cope.
Yet culture shock is relatively mild in comparison
with the much more serious situation, future shock.
Future shock is the dizzying disorientation brought
on by the premature arrival of the future.

Future shock is a time phenomenon, a product of
the greatly accelerated rate of change in society.
It arises from the superimposition of a new culture
on an old one.   It is culture shock in one's own
society.   But the impact is far worse...most
travelers, have the comforting knowledge that the
culture they left behind will be there to return
to.   The victim of future shock does not.

<div align="right">Future Shock</div>

FINDINGS

As stated in chapter one, the author believed that

the role of the NCO would remain relatively the same

through the year 2000.   The NCOs at the turn of the

century would perform basically the same functions and

jobs as they do today.   If there was a change, the change

would be in the "tools" used by the NCO.

The new tools used by NCOs might be different in

each area of NCO responsibility.   Examples include:

- Technician: Instead of using a screw driver or

welding gun, a laser pen or computer-assisted scanning

device could be the tool required on the flight line.

- Manager: While "Management-by-Objective," may be

valid today, at the turn of the century, NCOs could be

involved in military adaptions of "Quality Work Circles" and "Confrontation Meetings."

- Leadership: Leadership by example is a style purportedly practiced by many NCOs today; however, by 2000 situational leadership in leaner, more horizontal organizational structures may be the primary leadership style of the NCO.

Based on the literature search and research in chapters two, three, and four the author became aware of a possible unique role for the AF NCO at the turn of the century. The idea was contained in the title of this paper...the changing role of the AF NCO. The author had not previously focused on the term "role." The author's original focus on the term "role" included a preconceived definition. That definition dealt with specific skills or jobs the NCO performs today and would be required to perform in the future. However, The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language provided the author two different meanings to the word "role": "1. A character or part played by an actor in a dramatic performance. 2. The characteristic and expected social behavior of an individual. A function or position."

The dictionary definition of the word "role" unlocked for the author the significance of the information acquired during the literature search. Both the Megatrend Model and the Project 2000 Model prediction of the U.S.

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and AF environments at the turn of the century emphasized the need for new tools. At the same time, the literature search and research revealed that the significant aspect of the future for the NCO is...change. The tools will be different. However, the changes within society and the Air Force will exert the major influence on the role of the future NCO...not the new tools. The author's research revealed that his original hypothesis was largely incorrect. The role of the NCO of the future will be different than it is today. The role of the AF NCO of the future will be to help the airmen and DOD civilians they supervise adjust to change within society and the AF.

Change is not a passive experience. The American Heritage Dictionary defines change as: "1. To cause to be different; alter. 2. To give a completely different form of appearance to; transform." Change brings both threats and opportunities. As Toffler points out in Future Shock and Naisbitt relates in Megatrends change can bewilder and disorient people and societies. There must be some glue that holds independent work units--be they individuals, sections, or squadrons-- together. According to the authors of Corporate Cultures, that glue is a culture. (17:193)

Corporate Cultures uses the Webster New Collegiate Dictionary definition of culture, which is: "The inte-grated pattern of human behavior that includes thought,

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speech, action, and artifacts and depends on man's

capacity for learning and transmitting knowledge to

succeeding generations." A more informal definition

of culture offered in the book is "...the way we do

things around here."

Corporate Cultures research revealed that every

organization has a culture. The authors state:

> Whether weak or strong, culture has a powerful
> influence throughout an organization; it affects
> practically everything--from who gets promoted
> and what decisions are made, to how employees dress
> and what sports they play. (17:193)

A strong culture is a powerful influence for guiding the

behavior of people and it helps them do their jobs

better. In Corporate Culture, Deal and Kennedy state

the organizational or corporate culture consists of

five elements. (17:13) These elements are the values,

the heroes, the rites and rituals, the cultural network,

and the business environment. (17:13-15) Each of the

five elements are described as follows:

1. Values: This is the core element of the culture.

These are the foundation beliefs and concepts of an

organization. In some organizations the values that are

the essence of the organization show up in phrases that

reveal the essence of the organization. Examples include

DuPont's, "Better things for better living through chemistry"

and Caterpillar's, "24 hour parts service anywhere in the

world." The people in these organizations deeply believe

these sayings...They are more than just slogans. They
are the foundation of the organization.

  2.   Heroes: "If values are the soul of the culture,
then heroes personify those values and epitomize the
strength of the organizations." (15:4) The heroes are
real life success stories within the organization.
Heroes prove the values are valid and achievement within
the organization is possible and attainable. Heroes and
their stories that become legend perform many other
roles for the organization, such as role model, motivator
...symbolic of the company values, and model for success.
(15:4)

  3.   Rites and Rituals: "These are the systematic
and programmed routines of day-to-day life in the
company." (17:14) These routines can range from daily
work schedules to special ceremonies organized to reward
those in the organization that live or typify the values
of the organization. Deal and Kennedy believe the best
run organizations spend a lot of time on rituals.
Rituals provide special opportunity to create, recognize,
and add to the folk-lore of the heroes...real people that
live or have lived the values of the organization.

  4.   The Cultural Network: This network depends
on people's "second jobs." These are additional
responsibilities not covered in a wiring diagram or job
description. These second jobs are part of the informal

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communications of the organization. This system is described by some as the "grapevine". Deal and Kennedy label it the cultural network. This informal network carries information important to the culture, such as stories of heroes, examples of the organizational values, explanations of rites and rituals...along with positive and negative organizational gossip. The cultural network is the hidden hierarchy of an organization and must be understood and appreciated by the leaders of the real organizational structure. "In strong cultures, networks carry the beliefs and values that keep the culture alive and shared across levels and divisions, and among people." (15:6)

5. The Business Environment: "The biggest single influence on a company's culture is the broader social and business environment in which the company operates. A corporate culture embodies what it takes to succeed in this environment." (15:6) The bottom line is that the environment the organization exists in determines what the organization must do to be a success.

Organizations are human institutions; they are made up of people. They excel and achieve their organizational goals based on the people that make up the organization. Deal and Kennedy provide a convincing study which stresses that organizations with strong cultures succeed because the people within the organization

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believe they are special. As change disorients and
bewilders some, in the best organizations the "glue"
that holds the people together is the corporate or
organizational culture...consisting of values, heroes,
rites and rituals, the cultural network, and the
business environment. (17:193)

It is important not to be distracted by the "business
world" terms used by Deal and Kennedy in Corporate
Cultures. In their model, they use examples and terms
from the civilian sector. However, the concept is as
valid for the government and military sector as it is for
the private sector.

The significance of corporate culture to the AF
is to understand the advantage gained by using the
strengths of the culture concept. Deal and Kennedy use
terms such as heroes, rites, rituals--in the AF we
have heroes, ceremonies, traditions. In a real sense
military organizations have always had the equivalent
of a corporate culture. As the AF moves into the 21st
century, the importance of understanding corporate or
organizational culture becomes significant because of
the tradition of success that characterizes organizations
with a strong culture.

Organizations that have nurtured their identities by
shaping values, making heroes, spelling out rites and
rituals, and acknowledging the cultural network have an

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advantage. (17:15) These organizations have firm values

and beliefs to pass along, not just services or products.

They have beliefs to share and stories to tell, not just

things to do or profits to make. These organizations

are not managed by faceless bureaucrats but are led

by heroes, whom managers and workers believe in and

try to emulate. Organizations with strong cultures are

human institutions that provide real meaning for their

people--both on and off the job.

A strong culture is a powerful force for establishing

and maintaining desired behavior. It helps people within

the organization perform their jobs a little better,

according to Deal and Kennedy, in two distinct ways:

First, "A strong culture is a system of informal

rules that spells out how people are to behave most of

the time." (17:15) This translates to the people knowing

what is important--values--within the organization and

thus knowing what is expected of them. In a strong

culture, employees (airmen) will waste little time in

deciding how to act in a given situation, while people

in a weak culture waste a good deal of time trying to

determine what and how they should do things. "The

impact of a strong culture on productivity is amazing.

In the extreme, we estimate that a company can gain as

much as one or two hours of productive work per employee

per day." (17:15)

Second, "A strong culture enables people to feel

better about what they do, so they are more likely to
work harder." According to psychologist Frederick
Herzberg, workers today are confused. They feel cheated
by their jobs and they fill their lives and their time
with outside interests. Unlike workers of over twenty
years ago, today's workers' life values are uncertain.
(17:16) Herzberg believes that uncertainty is at the
core of the confusion of today's workers. But, in
organizations with a strong culture, to a great degree
much of the workers uncertainty is removed. This happens
because strong cultures "...provide structure and
standards and a value system in which to operate." (17:16)

Deal and Kennedy's culture concept comes down to
values...standards...and understanding the importance
of working with people in any organization. The role
of the NCO in the future...at the turn of the century...
will be to help airmen and DOD civilians adjust to change.
The NCO of the future will perform this role by continuing
to work with AF people...and be the "keeper of the Air
Force culture." The "tools" the AF NCO will use in the
future could include the ones used today such as leader-
ship skills, management techniques, technical expertise,
and acceptance of responsibility. Some of the NCO's
other "tools" may be new to the AF such as quality work-
circles, flex-time shifts, and tiger teams of generalists
and specialists that support more than one base or

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operating location. However, the _role_ of the NCO--the

part played--the expected social behavior performed

by the NCO will take on new importance.

The 21st century AF NCO, in order to help AF people

adjust to change, will be the maintainer...the teacher...

and the transmitter of the Air Force values, Air Force

heroes, Air Force rites and rituals, the Air Force

institutional network, and the Air Force war environment.

The AF NCO will be the "keeper of the Air Force culture."

The AF has provided the NCO with a framework for

the AF culture. The AF framework is "Project Warrior."

A former Chief of Staff of the Air Force, General Lew

Allen stated:

> Project Warrior was formulated to create an en-
> vironment where our people can learn from the
> warfighting lessons of the past and use that
> knowledge to better prepare for the future. I
> believe that a continuing study of military
> history, corbat leadership, the principles of
> war and particularly the application of airpower
> is necessary for us to meet the challenges that
> lie ahead. (42:2)

General Allen's words have been translated by AF

people in the field. In a 1983 _Airman_ magazine, the two

objectives of Project Warrior were defined as:

1.   Improve the fighting spirit and the perspective

of Air Force people about the mission and their role in

it.

2.   Reach an improved understanding of the theory

and practice of war--especially airpower's role. (21:15)

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When Project Warrior and other aspects of the Air
Force way of life are compared to the corporate culture
model there is a strong relationship. Using the five
elements of the corporate culture model as a reference,
the AF institutional culture can be observed and
documented.

1. Values: These are the basic concepts and be-
liefs of the AF. "...This nation is worth protecting.
It's worth fighting and risking your life for." (21:14)
This is the warfighting spirit of the Air Force.

2. Heroes: The role models in the AF are many.
Legends like Mitchell, Arnold, LeMay are plentiful.
There are also the Air Force officer and airman Medal
of Honor winners and the wing and squadron heroes that
are working within their organizations daily epitomizing
the strength and the values of the Air Force.

3. Rites and Rituals: The daily work rites are
numerous in the AF. They range from the security police
inspection prior to assuming mission responsibilities to
air crew mission briefings prior to flight. The rituals
that acknowledge and reward those who epitomize AF values
are steeped in tradition. They include promotion and
award ceremonies, induction into the NCO Corps, and
Change of Command ceremonies and retirements...all of
which anoint heroes for being the embodiment of AF values
and beliefs.

4.   The Cultural Network: The hidden hierarchy or
grapevine provides needed communication upward and down-
ward and across the Air Force. This network translates
and legitimizes the values, heroes, rites and rituals
of the AF. It also enables trends that are created
within the AF institution to be brought to the attention
of the senior AF leadership. Feedback serves as a "checks
and balances" mechanism. (60:180)

5.   The Business Environment: The environment
in which the AF must perform its mission is war. The
AF embodies what it takes to succeed in war. The AF's
values, heroes, rites and rituals, and institutional network
create the environment that encourages and allows its
warriors, officers, NCOs, and airmen to prepare for war
and to win, if required to fight. This environment
includes, as General Allen stated, the "...continuing study
of military history, combat leadership, the principles of
war and particularly the application of airpower...." (42:2)

The NCO, as was discussed in chapter two, is the AF
first-line supervisor. He is the AF institutional re-
presentative that daily embodies AF values and beliefs.
The NCO is the maintainer of the rites and the
institutional "passer on" of rituals, legends, and war
stories that maintain the essence of the warrior spirit.
The informal AF communications network is kept honest and
accurate by the NCO. NCOs will keep the flow of information

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moving up, down, and across the AF and they maintain

the combat-ready "environment" of the airmen.

Former President Harry S. Truman once said:

Remember who you are.
Remember where you came from.
Remember where you're going. (60:240)

President Truman's words capture the essence of corporate

culture and Project Warrior. The NCO will be on the front

line of reminding the airmen who they are (values) and

where the Air Force came from (heroes, rites and rituals)

and will help lead them where the AF is going.

Chapter six is an epilogue. It provides examples

of the actual workings of corporate culture within large,

complex organizations. Chapter six also contains a

discussion of areas of training that might help prepare

the NCO of the future to deal with change and be the

keeper of the Air Force culture.

CHAPTER SIX

> The institution builders of old knew the value of
> a strong culture and they worked hard at it. They
> saw themselves as symbolic players-actors in their
> corporations. They knew how to orchestrate, even
> dramatize events to drive their lessons home. They
> understand how corporations shape personal lives
> and were not shy about suggesting the standards
> that people should live by. If we are to have
> such great institutions tomorrow, the managers of
> today will have to take up this challenge again.
> <div align="right">Corporate Cultures</div>

"Anyone can hold the helm when the sea is calm"
<div align="right">Ancient Philosopher (47:174)</div>

EPILOGUE

The author has defined the future role of the AF

NCO and the theory of corporate culture has been documented.

The scope of this study was to determine the changing

role of the AF NCO. The author has defined the future

role of the AF NCO and that role within corporate culture

has been detailed. The research for this study has

highlighted two additional areas beyond the changing

role of the AF NCO that the author believes should be

discussed:

First, a brief look at two examples of corporate

culture in America in 1986 and how they work; then, an

overview of same areas that NCOs of the future should

be aware of in order to perform their new role.

The two corporate culture examples are Ford Motor

Company and General Motors (GM). In 1980, Ford Motor

Company was a billion dollars in the red for that year.
Ford's management believed the company was "...out of
touch with its employees, and worse, its customers. Ford
builds bland cars. Quality is an afterthought." (23:64)
Ford's plan to get out of the red was to change everything.
They would "find a less destructive way to manage, design
a whole new car that will bring customers back into
the showrooms, learn how to build quality cars." (23:64)

Ford had to change its shortsighted management creed
of cutting costs or increasing prices. Ford elected to
rebuild a positive corporate culture. "For Ford, over-
hauling its corporate culture wasn't an exercise in
idealism: it was a way to produce cars more cheaply."
(23:64) And Ford's cultural change appears to have been
successful. In 1986, six years after initiating its
cultural change, Ford earned one billion dollars in
profits. (23:64) Also, for the first time since 1924
Ford earned more profits than its rival, General Motors
Corporation.

(NOTE: While corporate culture has had some effect
on Ford's profits, other factors such as market conditions,
gas prices, and operating results also must be considered
when quantifying Ford's profits.) (23:66)

How has General Motors (GM) responded to Ford's
profits?--by changing their corporate culture! GM Chairman
Roger B. Smith "...has been trying radically to reshape

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GM's corporatue culture..." (62:84) Smith views GM as

a bureaucracy that discourages risk-taking and is slow

at decision-making. Smith has even distributed

"culture cards" to GM executives so they can carry them

in their pockets in order to remind them of their new

culture mission. (62:84) A typical card says:

> The fundamental purpose of General Motors is to
> provide products and services of such quality that
> our customers will receive superior value. Our
> employees and business partners will share in our
> success, and our stockholders will receive a sus-
> tained, superior return on their investment. (62:85)

Two positive cultural change indicators thus far at

GM are: (1) The corporation is making more decisions

based on long-term considerations instead of the tradi-

tional preoccupation with short-term results. (2) Managers

are granted "permission to fail" in order to encourage

initiative. (62:85) GM has elected to stick with its

new corporate culture in order to turn its core business

around and regain market share and profitability. (62:85)

Corporate culture is not just adaptable to the

automotive industry. John K. Clemens, a professor of

management at Hartwick College, in a 1986 article on

corporate culture, pointed out:

> Whether ancient Athenians threatened by Spartan
> assault, modern automakers tormented by the
> Japanese, or computer designers trying to capture
> the next leading edge technology, people need to
> be reminded of what their organizations stand for
> and what makes them worth fighting for.

> Smart executives are becoming as concerned about
> their organization's culture as they are about
> next quarter's earnings. The reason is simple:
> They realize it affects the bottom line. (13:164)

Recent writings on corporate culture point out that it is not surprising that the current culture interest in the U.S. comes from "...America's most feared and respected trading partner—Japan." (14:10) Perhaps, learning from the Japanese, the most important implication of corporate culture is a new relationship between people and work. "Organizations which succeed in creating internal cultures integrate the most important values of the individual with those of the organization so that work becomes a means of self-fulfillment." (14:10) This theme of more human oriented cultures appears to be a dominant characteristic for organizations of the future.

This theme is visible in the change from the industrial era philosophy, when there was a belief that "...people, like parts, were interchangeable and standardized...," to the prevailing outlook today that, "...individuals are becoming less easily interchanged and more intrinsic to the business." (46:16) The emphasis within future oriented organizations places a premium on individuals and emphasis on thinking, innovation, and individual responsibility for decision making. (46:16) Corporate culture works and the emphasis of the successful cultures for the future is human oriented.

While the scope of this study was to determine the changing role of the AF NCO, the author's research revealed some areas that should be included in preparing NCOs for the year 2000. First, the NCO of the future must be prepared to lead in an environment of continuing change. Special emphasis should be placed on situational leadership. "A good manager and military leader recognizes that the situation determines the appropriate leadership style and that he may need to shift rapidly between various styles." (55:4-103) This approach is called situational leadership—and is based on the fact that "...real life situations are never static. They're in a constant state of change." (27:15) The NCO of the future should know and practice the skills associated with the situational leader model. (27:63)

Second, in order to deal with change in the future NCOs must be innovative. "The challenge is to create a human climate conducive to innovation in both public and private institutions." (18:203) Two of the most important aspects of what innovators do is to create and implement ideas. The NCOs can be taught to be innovative. According to Denis Waitley in Winning the Innovation Game:

> Successful innovation, rather than resulting from
> genius or luck, is actually a learned and learnable
> process. Innovators aren't born knowing how to in-
> novate; they gain the ability through conscious,
> directed effort and desire, and they figure out as
> they go along. (60:39)

The innovative NCO will be important in the future.
For the innovator "...has the capacity not just for en-
visioning the future in an abstract, daydreaming,
fantasizing kind of way, but has the interest and the ca-
pability and the drive to actually do something about
the vision." (60:39)

Next, the NCO of the future will have to accept
responsibility as it applies to information-based
organizations. These type organizations can "...function
only if each individual and each unit accepts responsibility:
For their goals and their priorities, for their
relationships, and for their communications." (19:206)
Peter Drucker compares this type organization to a
symphony orchestra. "All instruments play the same score.
But, each plays a different part. They play together,
but they rarely play in unison." (19:206)

Drucker points out that information-based organizations
are not permissive, they are disciplined. Using the
orchestra example, Drucker sums up organizations of the
future as requiring:

> Strong decisive leadership; first rate orchestra
> conductors are without exception unspeakably de-
> manding perfectionists. What makes a first-rate
> conductor is, however, the ability to make even the
> most junior instrument at the last desk way back
> play as if the performance of the whole depended on
> how each one of those instruments renders its small
> supporting part. What the information-based organi-
> zation requires, in other words, is leadership that
> respects performance but demands self-discipline
> and upward responsibility from the first-level
> supervisor all the way to top management. (19:207)

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The fourth area that requires emphasis is parti-
cipatory management, which is a "...nontraditional
approach that develops responsibility even among entry-
level employees and encourages them to participate
directly in decisions governing work." (48:69) Whether
called autonomous work teams, problem solving groups or
quality circles, the emphasis is on involving all
workers in the decision-making process. This approach
has resulted in problems being solved at the activity
level, and thus, freeing managers to concentrate on long-
term strategies and the competition. (48:69) The
bottom line from organizations that have changed to
participatory management is that "...it improves worker
satisfaction, it's good for our business, and helps us
get the best ideas and creativity from our people." (48:69)

Next, the NCO of the future should be exposed to
zero-defect management. This management philosophy is
based on W. Edward Deming's belief that "quality is
everyone's responsibility." (24:17) According to Deming:

> ...high quality can't be inspected in, added on,
> coerced, demanded, or achieved through exhortation.
> ("Quality is everyone's responsibility!") Rather,
> high-quality goods and services are the natural
> products of an organization that's working right.
> (24:18)

From Deming's viewpoint, "working right" means
identifying everyone involved--workers, managers, suppliers--
to solve problems and ensure quality at every level of
work and management. Thus, if the zero-defect system

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is accepted and implemented by everyone in an organization, mass inspection or mass quality control is a waste of time. (24:18)

Another area that NCOs of the future should be trained in is crisis management. Gerald C. Meyers, former Chairman of American Motors, in his book When it Hits the Fan points out that leaders can't plan their way out of crises; they have to learn how to manage them. Meyers goes on to point out that managers:

> ...need to accept a crisis for what it is--a warning that a turning point is near. Then, they can take action. The circumstances that led to the crisis should be carefully studied so that the same mistakes won't be made again. And the opportunities created by a crisis should be sought out even as damage control is under way. A lot can be done during a crisis that would be difficult or impossible to accomplish during a business-as-usual period. (38:5)

Meyers believes that managers should be trained to manage crises...not mismanage them. (51:2)

The next emphasis for NCOs of the future is sensitivity. John Clemens, Director of the Hartwick Humanities in Management Institute, believes that management is not a science; instead, he views the art of managing as the art of being human. (25:42) Clemens believes that "management is, at its essence, one of the humanities-- that branch of learning that deals with the complexities of human thought and relationships." (25:42)

The NCOs in the year 2000 will have to be sensitive to the needs and aspirations of their people and be proficient in various counseling skills in order to help

their people through periods of rapid change and uncertainty. In The Manager's Bible, Carl Heyel states it simply, "...people are the medium through which the manager must work. When the individual employee is all right, the department and the company are all right, too!" (52:4)

The NCO of the future will face many challenges. He/she will have to deal with rapid changes within the American society and within the Air Force. In order to maintain and pass on the Air Force culture, NCOs in the year 2000 will have to be exposed to new philosophies of management and leadership. These new areas include increased human orientation in the AF work environment; exposure to situational leadership, participatory management, zero-defect management, and crisis management; training in innovation skills; emphasis on acceptance of responsibility; and an increased sensitivity to the needs and aspirations of the airmen, DOD civilians, and their families.

Corporate Cultures provides the "bottom line" on how the NCO at the turn of the century will be able to help the Air Force adapt to change and the problems and challenges that change will bring:

> The first impulse for most people is to fix a problem
> themselves. Managers of culture resist this temptation.
> They recognize that the longer-lasting solution is
> to focus on the culture and enable it to find its
> solution. They know that it's worth it, because when
> times are tough, the companies with strong cultures
> can reach deeply into their shared values and beliefs
> for the courage to see them through. When challenges
> arise, they can meet them. (15:8)

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