

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

**EFFECTIVENESS OF THE ARMY MENTORSHIP PROGRAM**

by

Lieutenant Colonel Richard J. Nieberding  
United States Army

Colonel Benjamin Leitzel  
Project Adviser

This SRP is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Master of Strategic Studies Degree. The U.S. Army War College is accredited by the Commission on Higher Education of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, 3624 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104, (215) 662-5606. The Commission on Higher Education is an institutional accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation.

The views expressed in this student academic research paper are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of the Army, Department of Defense, or the U.S. Government.

U.S. Army War College  
CARLISLE BARRACKS, PENNSYLVANIA 17013

# Report Documentation Page

*Form Approved*  
*OMB No. 0704-0188*

Public reporting burden for the collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to a penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number.

1. REPORT DATE <b>30 MAR 2007</b>		2. REPORT TYPE <b>Strategy Research Project</b>		3. DATES COVERED <b>00-00-2006 to 00-00-2007</b>	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE <b>Effectiveness of the Army Mentorship Program</b>				5a. CONTRACT NUMBER	
				5b. GRANT NUMBER	
				5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
6. AUTHOR(S) <b>Richard Nieberding</b>				5d. PROJECT NUMBER	
				5e. TASK NUMBER	
				5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) <b>U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, Carlisle, PA, 17013-5050</b>				8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)				10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)	
				11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)	
12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT <b>Approved for public release; distribution unlimited</b>					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES					
14. ABSTRACT <b>See attached.</b>					
15. SUBJECT TERMS					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES <b>17</b>	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT <b>unclassified</b>	b. ABSTRACT <b>unclassified</b>	c. THIS PAGE <b>unclassified</b>			

## **ABSTRACT**

**AUTHOR:** Lieutenant Colonel Richard J. Nieberding, Jr.  
**TITLE:** Effectiveness of the Army Mentorship Program  
**FORMAT:** Strategy Research Project  
**DATE:** 30 March 2007      **WORD COUNT:** 5210      **PAGES:** 17  
**KEY TERMS:** Leadership, Mentorship, Culture  
**CLASSIFICATION:** Unclassified

During the State of the Union Address (28 January 2003), President George W. Bush stated "...it is the men and women of America who will fill the need. One Mentor, one person, can change a life forever. And I urge you to be that one person." From that vision, the Army Leadership (the Secretary of the Army, the Army Chief of Staff, and the Sergeant Major of the Army) developed a strategy for 2005 on leaving a legacy through mentorship. As a result, the Army established an online voluntary Mentorship Program available through Army Knowledge Online (AKO). From the artifacts associated with this mentorship program, it appears that the Army highly values this program as a way to create a culture and climate that fosters learning and development for future leadership. This project will examine the effectiveness of mentorship in the today's Army and evaluate whether the program is sufficient to meet the needs for the Army's next generation of soldiers and leaders.



## EFFECTIVENESS OF THE ARMY MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

After about two and a half months of academic endeavor as a resident student at the Army War College, a classmate held the door for me as I exited the main academic building. This was not an unusual practice as many times fellow classmates will share a stroll to the parking lot or to the friendly confines of the post housing area and discuss the finer points of strategic thinking, strategic leadership, or the theory of war and strategy. On this particular day, my classmate, a career reserve component officer, asked me if I had ever had a mentor and if I had one, did I pursue the mentor or did the mentor select me as a mentee? I thought for a moment and came to the conclusion that I must have had a mentor or two during my twenty-four years of military service. As I reflected on my career that includes four years as a cadet at the United States Military Academy, my first memory of having a military mentor occurred when I was nineteen years old. This relationship occurred as the staff and faculty was either personally seeking cadets to sponsor or was being tasked by the institution to sponsor cadets. Whatever the motivation of this particular faculty member, I, along with about three or four other cadets, was matched with a senior captain from one of the academic departments. The relationship was primarily social but the officer also provided counsel and recommendations about future choices as we progressed through our pre-commissioning requirements over the three remaining years at West Point. I soon formed a bond or niche with the officer and would call upon him when I needed an azimuth check on a future decision about my development. I never asked for personal favors but maintained a personal and professional relationship. I cannot verify that the other cadets he sponsored formed a mentor type relationship with him, but it is a relationship that I have maintained during my entire career. Throughout the past twenty years, I have sometimes unexpectedly "bumped" into this officer and his wife and it was during those times that I rekindled the mentoring relationship. The advice and counsel sought from these unanticipated encounters were not directed towards any specific developmental issue but were more of a recap of the actions and decisions that I had made since we had last talked. After a quick disclosure and update of the past, we would talk about the general direction that I was headed on for the near-term and far-term future. It was just an azimuth check. The relationship between us exuded trust, confidence and respect. He was genuine in his demeanor as he probed to confirm that I had a sensible life plan that fit into my well-being and development. True to his character, he sometimes presented me his strong opinions but would always further explore options that may have been more acceptable and desirable to me. The relationship continues to this day even though his status has now changed to that of a retired

Colonel. His sincerity, respect, and openness have also captured my youngest son's attention as he has been privy to this mentor-mentee interaction.

The other mentor relationship that I hold close to my personal and professional development occurred when I was a First Lieutenant serving as a tank company executive officer. I think I could call my battalion executive officer a mentor. He was not directly in my rating chain (although I am sure that he provided valuable input to the battalion commander) but he certainly provided guidance, advice, and counsel not only towards the technical systems that affected our daily business but he also provided the value, leader, and character development that many young officers were longing for. I truly considered him a mentor but I do not think that I ever approached him about being a mentor. I simply observed his actions and listened to his words of wisdom. I took the distinctive aspects of his disposition, temperament, and outlook and added it to my repository of how a leader should carry himself. So much that I considered him a mentor; I frequently recited one of his favorite sayings and even used it as a theme in my speech during my company change of command ceremony. I gave him the due credit for the saying "if everyone does their job, everyone works less" and typically expressed it by referencing him as my mentor. I have not only espoused that value in a public venue but I have also explained that dictum to my subordinates during performance counseling. He made such a profound impact on my development that as I collect my thoughts and beliefs about leadership and soldiering I commonly refer back to that time under his influence. He may never know that he was a mentor to me but I certainly would label him as such.

As I reflect and wrestle with the idea of mentorship, I thought it best to start with its recognized definition. As you try to define mentorship, my belief is that most will relate it to an interaction between two individuals as I have described above. Somewhat humorous is the quote "Mentorship, probably the singular most misunderstood word surrounding counseling and leadership. Mentorship is not just a fancy buzzword."<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, my search for the definition of mentorship revealed extremely vague explanations, such as; "the quality or state of being a mentor."<sup>2</sup> Narrowing my search to the base word, mentor, reveals some clarity as to the meaning of mentorship. Webster's defines mentor as, "1. a close, trusted, and experienced counselor or guide ... 2. TEACHER, TUTOR, COACH."<sup>3</sup> The word mentor is also synonymous with "adviser, counselor, preceptor, teacher, instructor, professor, tutor, mentor, proctor, master, guru, and guide."<sup>4</sup> Ironically, the word leader is not even referenced as a definition or synonym to mentor but I think that it certainly has strong linkages especially in the military culture. The Army's definition of mentorship is outlined in the newly released *Field Manual (FM) 6-22, Army Leadership*. It is defined as "the voluntary developmental relationship that exists between a

person with greater experience and a person of lesser experience characterized by mutual trust and respect (*Army Regulation [AR] 600-100, Army Leadership*).<sup>5</sup> Interestingly, comparing the newly released *AR 600-100, Army Leadership*, dated 8 March 2007, with the older version of *AR 600-100*, dated 17 September 1993 that remained in effect until 22 March 2007, the word mentor, or derivatives there of (mentorship), is referenced 13 times versus no references in the older version. Keeping score, the new *FM 6-22, Army Leadership* also refers to mentor or its derivatives 67 times as this concept permeates the manual, typically closely aligned with coaching and counseling. This evidence lends credence that the Army is working aggressively to define, describe, and formally illustrate the idea of mentorship and not have it labeled as an ornamental catchphrase.

These definitions listed above from the latest updates are somewhat contradictory to previous published leadership development literature. From *Department of the Army (DA) Pamphlet (PAM) 350-58, The Enduring Legacy, Leader Development for America's Army* (dated 13 October 1994), "He [the commander or supervisor] decides leader assignments, formulates, supervises, and executes collective and individual training, to include professional development programs, and acts as the organization's primary teacher, coach, counselor, and — in special cases — mentor. Mentoring is more personalized and individualized than teaching and coaching. It is an optional, subjective process between a concerned senior leader and a very select few of his subordinates. Mentoring involves candid dialogue, career advice, caring and support, commitment, and assistance with assignments."<sup>6</sup> It is interesting that the clarification of "in special cases" is made with regards to mentoring. Often that "special case" creates animosity and dissension in the ranks. "Special cases" can often be viewed as favoritism and generates ill feelings of "haves and have-nots."

The concept of mentorship may often be difficult to explain, establish, and delineate but one can certainly recognize it if he sees it. If you have been in the Army for at least ten years, you have seen that mentoring is occurring and on-going. We may not know how or why it happens but it does. Previously, I described my personal accounts of what mentorship meant to me but accounts by operational and strategic leaders of our most recent conflicts provide evidence that mentorship was a big influence on their actions and decisions as well. From the book *Cobra II*, in describing the efforts that led to the invasion of Iraq during Operation Iraqi Freedom, the account read, "Gary Luck, the XVIII Airborne Commander in the Gulf War and [Tommy] Frank's former commander in Korea, who had been installed at CENTCOM as a mentor and adviser to Franks, raised the possibility that Saddam might use his WMD to frustrate the assault on Baghdad and the military's plan to encircle the capital with operating bases."<sup>7</sup>

Furthermore as the plan for the invasion continued, the impact of mentors continued to shape the thoughts and assessments of the ground commander, LTG McKiernan, as evidenced through the passage, “Fred Franks, the retired general who led the VII Corps during the Gulf War and who been [David] McKiernan’s commander at the time and mentor since, was invited to observe the exercise and was briefed on the plan November 22. When he was alone with McKiernan, he was so convinced of the plan’s flaws as to pose a simple question: “Is this your plan?” The query from his mentor reinforced McKiernan’s determination to push for a new plan.”<sup>8</sup>

Everyone in the Army knows that mentorship is important to the development of its leaders – junior, senior, tactical, operational, and strategic. This point was ever more evident during an after action review discussion with my Army War College classmates. The discussion and analysis about the six core courses in the curriculum, Reflections on Strategic Leadership, evoked one of the classmates from my seminar to comment that being a mentor is one of the most important responsibilities that we should embrace as we depart the War College.<sup>9</sup> It was his point that all leaders should seek to train, teach, coach, and mentor all of our subordinates and not particularly focus on just those special cases.

The Army as an institution also recognizes that mentorship is critical to the future development of its leaders in today’s volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous environment. So much so that the effort conducted by the Army Training and Leader Development Panel (ATLDP) Officer Study Report to The Army in June 2002 produced findings, conclusions, and recommendations “about the Army’s people, their beliefs, and the systems that sustain their commitment to the institution.”<sup>10</sup> The report provided strategic conclusions and recommendations on Army Culture, Officer Education System (OES), Training, Systems Approach to Training, and Training and Leader Development.<sup>11</sup>

Within the Army Culture, the panel reported on Service Ethic, Families, Operational Pace, Retention, Micromanagement, Officer Evaluation Reports, Officer Personnel Management, and Mentoring.<sup>12</sup> With regards to mentoring in this particular report, which was focused primarily on officers, the panel concluded that “Officers believe mentoring is important for both personal and professional development, yet a majority of officers report not having mentors. The Army’s mentoring definition and doctrine need revising. Officers would like to see a greater emphasis on mentoring, but do not want formal, directed programs.”<sup>13</sup>

The report’s recommendation for mentoring as a part of the Army’s Culture was to “Develop doctrine for mentoring in *FM 6-22 (22-100), Army Leadership*. Teach it throughout (OES), so junior officers understand what mentoring is and how they should be mentored, and

field grade officers understand how they should be mentoring junior officers. Place emphasis in Pre-Command Courses so future battalion and brigade commanders understand Army doctrine, their role in mentoring, and the expectations of the officers they will mentor.”<sup>14</sup> Based on the evidence provided previously, the Army has been responsive in that regard by the very recent update and release of *AR 600-100, Army Leadership* and *FM 6-22 (22-100), Army Leadership, Competent, Confident, and Agile*. Effectiveness of the new doctrine in the education system is yet to be determined as the formal concepts are introduced into the classroom and until a cycle or two of students evaluate the application of the instruction.

Additionally, the ATLDP considered Training and Leader Development Principles involved in meeting the necessities of full spectrum operations.<sup>15</sup> The principles addressed in this report were Mission Focused, Doctrinally Based, Performance Oriented, Train as You Fight, Leader as Primary Trainer, Know Yourself, Lifelong Learning, and Mentorship.<sup>16</sup> The mentorship principle provides that “Mentoring enables senior leaders to train and educate officers. Mentoring is not a formal program, but part of the stock and trade of the soldier’s profession. It focuses on the art of leadership.”<sup>17</sup> The two relationships that I personally reflected on were definitely informal. They were so informal that I may not have even categorized them as mentorship but more as just good leadership. There is literature that suggests that “mentor-mentee relationships can be informal or formal. One difference between the two is that in a formal relationship, the mentor and mentee agree to an ongoing, planned partnership with stated goals and sometimes even a designated time period. An informal mentor-mentee relationship provides help in an unstructured, casual setting.”<sup>18</sup>

The United States Army places an enormous importance on incorporating mentorship into its leadership and culture. So much so, the Army Knowledge Online (AKO) has invested time, space, bandwidth, and resources to create an interactive website dedicated to fostering mentor/mentee relationships. Navigation through the website provides evidence that this program must be an important aspect to the Army as an institution. If an outsider of the AKO community was able to view this website, they may conclude that this idea of mentorship is so important to the Army culture that the construction of the site has incorporated a photo of the President of the United States coupled with his quote about how mentorship can change a life forever. That webpage should stand out as a very clear message to our culture that mentorship is very important to our future and has the attention of the Commander-in-Chief.

Nested in the President’s vision of mentorship, the site builds on the Secretary of the Army, the Army Chief of Staff, and the Sergeant Major of the Army’s strategic mentorship direction stating, “There are many honorable ways to leave a legacy; our focus for 2005 is on

leaving a legacy through mentorship.”<sup>19</sup> The mentorship letter continues “...in order to leave a legacy, a concerted effort and commitment are required. What we, together, are asking each military and civilian leader is to make a commitment to mentor one person beyond the chain of command starting this year and carrying the practice on into future years.”<sup>20</sup> The highest ranking civilian, officer, and non-commissioned officers in our culture have espoused their image of what our future requires in the form of legacy and leadership so it may be executed throughout the Army. The evidence that I have analyzed may prove contrary.

As a result of the strategic direction from the Department of the Army leadership, the Army G1 (Personnel Division) developed the Army Mentorship Community and the Army Mentorship Resource Center. Both resources are available to those who have access to AKO to include active component and reserve component (AC/RC) soldiers, DA Civilians, spouses, retirees, veterans, cadets, disabled Soldiers/veterans, and contractors with access to AKO.<sup>21</sup> The idea of the Army Mentorship Community is to provide a medium for mentors and protégés (mentees) to either link up in a face to face mentor relationship or to carry out the relationship online. “E-mentoring, a formal mentoring program where the mentor and mentee communicate exclusively through email has become increasingly popular.”<sup>22</sup> Certainly, our younger soldiers have grown up with access to the internet and e-mentoring may provide an outlet to create more mentor relationships.

The Army Mentorship Community and the Army Mentorship Resource Center website also “offer mentor and mentee guidance, tools, references, articles, a mentorship handbook, a sample Individual Action Plan, a sample Mentorship Agreement for the mentor and the mentee to consider in establishing their mentoring relationship, a searchable mentor profile server for mentors and mentees to find specific one-on-one mentors, and multiple tailored mentorship forums for individuals to ask for more experienced personnel in specific career areas for advice and mentorship.”<sup>23</sup> The site has a plethora of information that any user can exercise in either tailoring an existing mentor relationship or exploring the idea of developing a relationship.

The site also has the Army Mentorship Profile Server, a tool that can link mentors to mentees or visa versa using a host of profiles. An AKO user can register into the mentorship website and populate the data with personal information to include personal/professional background, race, gender, age, rank, military and civilian education levels, current or former duty position, organization, state, marital status, MOS/career program, and Myers Briggs personality traits. Additionally, the AKO user can select a type of mentor/mentee relationship based on availability and preference. Those options are listed as Traditional One-on-One

Mentor/Mentee, Relationship (Face to Face), Virtual One-on-One Mentor/Mentee (online or email), Online Tailored Mentorship sub-community to forum, and Other.

The AKO user can search the Army Mentorship Profile Server with up to five criteria in order to “find” a mentor or mentee that satisfies the user’s personal criteria or needs. The more refined the criteria, the tighter the pool of possible matches for the AKO user as he searches for the “right” match. If the search has provided the AKO user a potential person that may serve as a mentor or mentee, then the initiator sends an email to the selected person and asks if he or she is willing to serve as a mentor or mentee depending on the reason for selection. The initiator must then wait for a response as to whether or not that selected person will serve as a mentor or mentee.

This system is certainly one way to “find” a person to serve as a mentor or mentee but as I probed deeper into the system, I found many flaws with the profiles that were populated. Being assigned as a student at the Army War College, I thought it would be interesting to search by Professional Military Education to see how many senior leaders with Military Education Level 1 (MEL1), such as Senior Service College, experience registered and populated the database. My search for both mentors and mentees with MEL 1 level education produced a list of 33 total matches. As I opened each of the 33 profiles, I started to see a trend where lower enlisted and junior officers had populated their profile with MEL 1 experience. My analysis of the trend is that the lower enlisted and junior officers that listed MEL1 in their profile truly did not know what it meant but were trying to accurately populate the database to the best of their ability. They certainly are not even eligible to participate in MEL1 education based on time in service and other educational prerequisites. To further the perspective as to how many AKO users had populated the MEL 1 entry incorrectly, I counted those on that particular search list that were not Lieutenant Colonels or Colonels. From this particular inquiry, I counted 15 of the 33 that were not Lieutenant Colonels or Colonels who had profiled themselves as being MEL 1 graduates. Almost half had incorrectly populated that particular search and probably did it without malice or ill intent. They just did not know the meaning of the particular criteria.

In another effort to search the profiles with another criterion that personally applied to me as a professional officer, I selected to search the database by FA 43 Human Resource Management. The search provided the names of five individuals. Of the five individuals, four were field grade officers that listed Headquarters, Department of the Army (HQDA-Army Staff) as their current duty position. From an outsider looking into this pool of potential mentor/mentees, it would certainly indicate to me that the officers at the tactical or operational level are not searching this website in their quest to find a mentor relationship. I would deduce

that the personnel from the HQDA staff were prompted or encouraged to “load” the database so that there would be mentors in the FA43 arena search function. My analysis may be a bit pessimistic and jaded and I could be completely inaccurate, but again, it is my perception of the effectiveness of this system. To show support to the officers, I would assume that their intentions are genuine and truly interested and concerned with being mentors. The fifth entry was a Staff Sergeant from the 90<sup>th</sup> Regional Readiness Command in Little Rock Arkansas. To the Non-commissioned officer’s credit, she listed her specific goals to the mentoring relationships as: “My goal is to try to instill in the person a need to improve and invest in a positive life with themselves, God and others. To motivate them to do the best that they can and to make good sound choices that brings out the best results.”<sup>24</sup> These are excellent reasons and justifications for being a mentor.

Provided that the Army has invested the internet space for a mentorship community and given the fact that so much of our daily lives are internet based, the leap could be made that this “e-mentoring” is certainly a wave of the future and a possible means to the ends of ensuring mentorship legacy and development of leaders in our Army. The evidence that I have uncovered suggests a failure to meet these lofty goals. Less than 1% of the potential AKO users are showing interest in the mentorship information as examined through the profile listings (see table 1). Although there are 1,292 active users, only 573 have filled the profiles with data. The other users are probably using the search engine to find a mentor or mentee without “officially” registering a profile similar in fashion as to how I collected the data in my discussion above. From a pure numbers aspect, Non-commissioned Officers using the mentorship profile system totaled 610, Commissioned Officers totaled 409, Warrant Officers totaled 21, and civilian personnel ranging through the categories of Grade Scale, Senior Executive Service, Wage Grade and other various categories totaled 257.<sup>25</sup> The mentorship vision by our national and institutional leadership is not being taken seriously if you isolate this particular individual metric.

Total AKO users (those with AKO accounts)	1.9 Million <sup>26</sup>
Active users in the Army Membership Community	1,292 <sup>27</sup>
Percentage of personnel using mentorship web sites	0.068%

Table 1: Use of Mentorship Web Sites

Although the Army Mentorship Profile Server presents some very poor statistics, the Army also offers the ability to engage in mentorship discussion through mentorship forums on the Army Mentorship Community website. The multiple tailored mentorship forums include the categories: Mentorship by Position (such as commander, First Sergeant, platoon leader and

staff positions), Officer Combat Arms Mentorship, Officer Combat Support Mentorship, Officer Combat Service Support Mentorship, Officer Information Operations Mentorship, Officer Operational Support Mentorship, Officer Institutional Operational Support Mentorship, Officer Special Branches Mentorship, Special Officer Mentorship, Special Enlisted Mentorship, Civilian Mentorship (a new program), and Mentorship by Constituent Category (such as retiree, spouse contractor, and veteran).<sup>28</sup> Interestingly, there is evidence that many of these mentorship forums were established and operational by 18 November 2004 as indicated by the very first entries by an army contractor.<sup>29</sup> Each of the forums provides “the opportunity for open dialogue between voluntary mentor and those seeking advice, guidance, and mentorship.”<sup>30</sup> The forum dialogues are initiated by a person who has a question or issue and the discussions will continue as long as other participants want to continue to provide guidance and advice.

The forums appear to be a great resource for an AKO user to get guidance and advice from a specific category of mentorship forum. However, as I examined all the categories, my perception was that the forums were not being used to their full potential or populated with questions that were relevant to the category. In a large majority of the forums there were no entries other than the “welcome” entry by the original contractor. My other observation was that in many instances, if a person initiated a question in a certain forum, the question may not have been answered in a timely fashion (sometimes months before a response was posted) or even answered at all. For example, from the Officer Combat Arms Mentorship (11 - Infantry Forum) the first entry (dated 3 December 2004) was the welcome statement and purpose for the forum. The next entry (dated 9 December 2004) asks the question, “I am 11b, E5 how does this work?”<sup>31</sup> The next entry (dated 3 August 2006) replies, “Well, 2 years between replies tells me it doesn’t work very ...)”<sup>32</sup>

To illustrate another example of the inefficiency of the forum, another AKO user asked a question (dated 1 September 2005) under the topic heading “A simple call for advice” on the 21 Engineers Forum. His question or issue was listed as such:

I just read the different bits of information on mentoring within the Army. My situation calls for someone outside of the Army in a government job, perhaps. I am an Engineer Officer that has been told that I will be medically separated from the Army in early OCT. My time in uniform has been short although my desire to stay active within the military community is huge. I have learned that the Army is not about rehabilitation, but still works on a "move up or move out" status. I have cognitive issues that never made OBC a possibility. However, I think that with proper mentoring, I could really start to learn a skill that might seem rote or routine to most, but suited for my head injured ailments. This is a great thing that the Army is doing through AKO, especially as the "weblog" generation gets more and more into leadership positions. I went here first...do any Engineers have advice?<sup>33</sup>

To date, as of 12 March 2007, there is no other entry addressing his issue either giving him a piece advice or directing him to someone that may be of assistance.

The Army Mentorship Community is very upfront with the issue of timely responses or the lack there of in their membership welcome letter. The letter states "It may take some time to get the word out and populate the forums and the profile server, so do not get discouraged if you do not get an immediate response or find a large pool of profiles to select from initially."<sup>34</sup> If a Soldier is waiting for an extended period of time to get a bit of guidance or advice from a computer forum from someone he may not even know, then what good is the forum in terms of creating a legacy for mentorship?

In contrast to the Mentorship forums and the general lack of involvement within those particular professional forums, the AKO also has forums that you can access with the direct AKO log-on. The forums currently number 15,453, as of 12 March 2007, and may actually provide some form of mentorship if open forum advice, information, or counsel is really considered mentorship. My further examination of this forum site shows me that there is a true lack of care for the mentorship of our Army. These forums are anything but developmental, both professionally and personally. The topics range from gays in the military, bi-sexuality, military pagans, b#\*ches, gripes, and complaints, and clean jokes. The message totals in these forums range in the tens of thousands per forum topping out at almost 105,000 messages in one forum as compared to most of the mentorship forums which only have one or two message per forum. From that evidence, it appears that the mentorship forum is not working to fulfill the needs of those who want a mentor/mentee relationship or perhaps, the AKO users would rather spend their time "chatting" about some very insignificant issues.

Based on the evidence that I have presented, it is my belief that the current mentorship program is totally ineffective. The focus may have been endorsed at the top but it has not been accepted and executed throughout the middle and lower levels within the organization. The pure statistics and extracted personal messages clearly build a case that mentorship in the Army is not something that can be fostered through websites, emails, and chat forums. Mentorship in the Army requires a very human, personal encounter that cannot be passed through digits and optic fiber lines. The unresponsiveness in the examples provided above unquestionably offer that the program is not accepted by the masses. The lack of immediate response is acceptable according to the proponent but it is unacceptable when a soldier is looking for guidance especially if the person seeking advice asked for assistance days, months or years ago.

Corporate business may be using these e-mentoring solutions to foster development within those types of organizations but those organizations are focused on profit. There is no monetary profit in the Army and in leader development; our capital is our individuals. It is the work and investment of the leadership that builds our capital and it must permeate throughout the organization. "Simply put good leadership stimulates development; mentorship magnifies that development."<sup>35</sup>

Mentorship has been occurring in the Army whether it was outlined as a Commander in Chief vision or captured in an Army legacy theme. It may have softly defined meanings and it may not be totally understood but it is this concept that has received much attention in the organization over the past few years. The Army has taken measures to bring it to the forefront of our culture but the effectiveness of those actions is yet to be seen. Evidence presented in this paper clearly shows that effectiveness of the mentorship theme and current programs have not even taken root. The writings in the revised leadership manuals certainly provided a more academic approach through capturing the idea of mentorship and massing its effects with good training, coaching and counseling. The manuals will certainly assist in the explanation of the term and provide a foundation for understanding the concept but the individual soldier may not fully appreciate the true meaning of mentorship until the member has experienced it. This relationship cannot be forced. You cannot search for it. It has to "happen" between two individuals. It requires effort on leaders' part and will continue to be evermore challenging given our current and potential future operational tempo. "To be an effective mentor, you need the experience and wisdom of your years. You also have to care. If you really care about your soldiers, then you will devote the necessary time and attention to guiding them. Mentoring can take place anywhere. It is a key way to lead and to strengthen Army values."<sup>36</sup> Mentoring is about leadership and about caring beyond the normal everyday routine actions that a soldier conducts. Mentoring does not occur through websites, written action plans, and mentorship handbooks. It requires effort on the person who has the greater experience to exert that effort to develop the person with the lesser experience.

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of the Army, *The Army Noncommissioned Officer Guide*, Field Manual 7-22.7 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Army, 23 December 2002), 5-16.

<sup>2</sup> Webster's Third New International Dictionary, (Springfield MA: G. & C. Merriam Co., 2002), 1412.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Jess Stein and Stuart Berg Flexner, eds., *The Random House Thesaurus* (New York: Random House, 1984), 457.

<sup>5</sup> U.S. Department of the Army, *Army Leadership, Competent, Confident, and Agile*, Field Manual 6-22 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Army, 12 October 2006), Glossary-3.

<sup>6</sup> U.S. Department of the Army, *The Enduring Legacy, Leader Development for America's Army*, Department of the Army Pamphlet 350-58 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Army, 13 October 1994) 13-14

<sup>7</sup> Michael R. Gordon and General Bernard E. Trainor, *Cobra II, The Inside Story of the Invasion and Occupation of Iraq* (New York: Pantheon Books), 90-91.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 84.

<sup>9</sup> Comments by COL Paul Giovino during U.S. Army War College seminar discussion, *Reflections on Strategic Leadership Core Courses Wrap-up*, 8 March 2007. The comments made were in response to the question of what is something that a student should take away from the strategic teaching of the USAWC.

<sup>10</sup> U.S. Army, *The Army Training and leader Development Panel Officer Study Report to The Army* pg OS-1.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., OS-7.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., OS-10.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., OS-11.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., OS-20.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., OS-21.

<sup>18</sup> Vera Wilson, "a Hand from Higher Up," *Today's Officer, Military Officer's Association of America*, Spring 2007, 22.

<sup>19</sup> U.S. Department of the Army, U. S. Secretary of the Army Francis J. Harvey, U.S. Army Chief of Staff GEN Peter J Shoemaker, and Sergeant Major of the Army Kenneth O. Preston, "Leaving a Legacy through Mentorship," memorandum for the members of the U.S. Army, Washington, DC, 14 July 2005.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Army Mentorship Strategy, "Leaving a Legacy Through Mentorship," available from <http://www.army1.army.mil/hr/MRC/Legacy.pdf>; Internet; accessed 19 December 2006.

<sup>22</sup> Wilson, 24.

<sup>23</sup> U.S. Army Mentorship Community, "Welcome Message" available from <http://www.armyg1.army.mil/welcome.htm>; Internet; accessed 12 February 2007.

<sup>24</sup> Army Mentorship Profile Server (AMPS), available from <https://www.g1intranet.army.mil/mentorship/login.asp>; Internet; accessed 19 December 2006.

<sup>25</sup> Kittie L. Messman, e-mail message to author, 18 December 2006.

<sup>26</sup> *Army Knowledge Online Home Page*, Account Stats, available from <https://www.us.army.mil/suite/portaltop>; Internet; accessed 14 March 2007.

<sup>27</sup> Kittie L. Messman, 18 December 2006.

<sup>28</sup> U.S. Army Mentorship Community, Forum Instructions available from <https://www.us.army.mil/suite/page/133132>; Internet; accessed 12 February 2007.

<sup>29</sup> *Army Knowledge Online Home Page*, White Pages, available from <https://www.us.army.mil/suite/portaltop>; Internet; accessed 14 March 2007.

<sup>30</sup> U.S. Army Mentorship Community, "Welcome Message," available from <http://www.armyg1.army.mil/welcome.htm>; Internet; accessed 12 February 2007.

<sup>31</sup> U.S. Army Mentorship Community, "Forum Instructions," available from <https://www.us.army.mil/suite/page/133132>; Internet; accessed 12 February 2007.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> U.S. Army Mentorship Community, "Welcome Message," available from <http://www.armyg1.army.mil/welcome.htm>; Internet; accessed 12 February 2007.

<sup>35</sup> *The Army Noncommissioned Officer Guide*, FM 7-22.7, 5-16.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

