The Impact of Generational Change:
Managing Millennials in the Military

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Executive Summary

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A great deal of literature exists regarding the problems that military leaders are facing as a result of the large number of Millennials within the ranks. This research project examines the broader organizational issue of managing Millennials in the military as relevant to the Multifunctional Platoon. In addition to examining the management of Millennials, the researcher also examined the Multifunctional Platoon’s leaders. The purpose of doing such is to answer the primary research question of this project, which is as follows: In what ways does the Multifunctional Platoon leadership need to modify their management style to adjust to the Millennial soldiers in the Army?

As this research project is focused on how Millennials are affecting the Multifunctional Platoon leaders, the researcher relied extensively on published research concerning the Millennial generation and their presence in the contemporary workforce. To supplement this research, the researcher also conducted subject matter expert interviews with 4 of this platoon’s leaders, including 1 Team Leader, 2 Squad Leaders, and the Platoon Sergeant. The researcher also distributed surveys in order to gather data on Millennial characteristics and desires. 35 surveys were distributed and 27 were returned. The data from all of these sources was then examined and used as a basis for the researcher’s recommendations for the Multifunctional Platoon.

The data from all of the aforementioned sources revealed that the soldiers of the Multifunctional Platoon embody many of the characteristics and ideals commonly associated
with the Millennial generation. As a result, the leaders of the Multifunctional Platoon are often compelled to micromanage these Millennial soldiers in order to accomplish the mission. This occurs as a reaction to the Millennial soldiers’ tendency to question their leaders and subvert their authority.

In order to resolve these issues, the researcher recommends several possible courses of action for the Multifunctional Platoon’s leaders. These recommendations include additional leadership training for the Multifunctional Platoon’s leaders plus further clarification on the distinct role of a military leader. Ultimately, the leaders of the Multifunctional Platoon must balance accommodating the Millennial generation with maintaining the traditional customs and courtesies of the Army.
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Chapter 1: Problem Definition

Background

In contemporary American culture, few organizations can boast a longstanding history of tradition like the United States Army can. Since its formal establishment in 1775, the Army has shaped much more than just battlefields; it has impacted the lives of the hundreds of thousands of men and women who have served. Army leaders have instilled particular habits and ideals in these men and women, who ultimately pass these ideals and habits down as tradition. However, in recent years, some soldiers outwardly question or even reject these traditions.

These soldiers are the Army’s Millennials. Typically referred to as Generation Y, Millennials were born between the years 1980 and 1995 (Williams, 2015). The Millennials are the largest generational cohort yet, beating Generation X and the Baby Boomers by nearly 20 million (Goldman Sachs, 2016). At present, Millennials make up the largest demographic of the Armed Forces (“Saluting Millennials,” 2016). Millennials embody several characteristics which conflict with the conventional concept of the American soldier. These characteristics include a sense of entitlement, a desire for instant gratification, and the instinct to allow others to solve their conflicts for them (Howe, 2003). Millennials also prioritize work/life balance with regards to career selection, which directly conflicts with the Army’s culture where duty trumps all (Prindle, 2010). Managing soldiers with this type of mentality poses plenty of new problems for Army leaders.

Nearly all incoming soldiers now fall into the Millennial category, and most of the Army’s junior commissioned officers are also part of this generation (“Recruiting the Best,” 2016). For the Army’s senior leaders, policy makers, and Initial Entry Training (IET) instructors,
several problems emerge as a result of this large Millennial presence. These problems are best summarized as follows:

- Millennials strive to work “only the bare minimum hours required,” plus they tend to request additional time off beyond federal holidays and 30 days of annual paid leave (Cunningham, 2014).
- Millennials expect to achieve accelerated advancement through the ranks, with little regard for the experience and qualifications necessary for promotion (Cunningham, 2014).
- Millennials often question authority and generally “have a harder time respecting” their superiors (Ender, 2014).

Ultimately, Millennials are resistant to conform to the Army’s traditions and customs, thereby forcing Army leaders to adapt their management styles and techniques.

**Research Problem**

The aforementioned issues are evident in many military installations across the globe. For this particular research project, the research and data will focus on soldiers of the Multifunctional Platoon of Delta-23 Military Intelligence Company. This platoon is based out of Joint Base Lewis-McChord in Washington state. It consists of approximately 35 soldiers with several different Military Occupational Specialties from various backgrounds. As evident by the platoon composition presented in Appendix G, all of these soldiers are Millennials in accordance with the definition presented earlier in this chapter.

This research project examines how the leadership of the Multifunctional Platoon manages its Millennial soldiers. Special attention will be paid to what changes or accommodations must be made in order to effectively manage the Millennials in this platoon.
MANAGING MILLENNIALS IN THE MILITARY

Thus, the primary research question is as follows: in what ways does the Multifunctional Platoon leadership need to modify their management style to adjust to the Millennial soldiers in the Army? In order to properly examine these facets of the Multifunctional Platoon, the following sub-questions will be posed:

- What characteristics are unique to the Millennials within the Multifunctional Platoon?
- How do the Millennials in the Multifunctional Platoon tend to view their service in the military?
- What work-related expectations and desires do the Millennials in the Multifunctional Platoon have?

Research Objective

Through a combination of surveys and interviews, information was gathered regarding the impact of the presence of Millennials in the military and how this presence affects the management of this platoon, thus capturing a snapshot of a larger organizational trend in the Army. The findings of the research project will be presented to the leaders of the Multifunctional Platoon, as well as the Company Commander who is in charge of this particular group of soldiers. Ultimately, this research project will help Army leaders to better mentor and manage the incoming Millennial soldiers. It will also help these leaders to adapt current practices and policies to benefit the changing landscape of the Army’s human capital.

Research Scope

This research project focuses on the soldiers of the Multifunctional Platoon. Many of the so-called Millennial tendencies do not necessarily apply to every single Millennial soldier, never mind those in the Multifunctional Platoon. While broad information regarding the characteristics of Millennials may be used to support a theory, the application of the research and
recommendation of action focuses exclusively on the Multifunctional Platoon. Though this research product reviews the relationships between Millennials and other generations in the Army, no detailed research has been conducted on these generations.
Chapter 2:

Literature Review

This research project focuses on how the leaders of the Multifunctional Platoon manage their Millennial soldiers. As there is no existing literature that applies specifically to this platoon, the following literature review will focus primarily on the broad concept of managing Millennials in both military and non-military environments. This literature draws from relevant books, theses, articles, presentations, and reports revolving around the recent research concerning the aforementioned concepts. Certain bodies of research, such as Stafford and Griffis’ “A Review of Millennial Generation Characteristics and Military Workforce Implications,” are referenced repeatedly due to the close connections to the topic of this research project. Overall, most of the available literature falls within the following realms of information: (a.) recruitment, (b.) training, and (c.) management. The following literature review adheres to the same organizational pattern and includes two additional sub-sections which bookend this particular chapter: one sub-section elaborating on the Millennial generation and one sub-section covering the conflicting research.

The Millennial Generation

As explained in the background section of this research paper, the Millennial generation possesses a unique set of characteristics that set them apart from previous generations. This is likely due to the different experiences that each generation has encountered within their given lifespans. Many significant historical events occurred while the Millennial generation was coming of age. These events include one that stands out above all others: the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. Millennials often cite this particular event as the single most influential moment of their lives thus far (Towns, 2011). On this day, many young Millennials were
exposed to a world in which the United States is vulnerable and the government lacks total control (Hoover, 2011). This exposure likely shaped the common Millennial mentality that has been discussed throughout the background section.

The terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001 are not the Millennial generation’s only encounter with terrorism and violence. The school shooting at Columbine High School, the Oklahoma City bombing, and the Boston Marathon bombing are just a few examples of instances in which Millennials were exposed firsthand to terrorism and its subsequent cultural response. In most cases, this cultural response consists of a heavy social media presence and round-the-clock news updates, perhaps as attempts to connect with others following these tragic events. It also serves as a catalyst for expression and a potential motivator with regards to Millennial involvement in public policy and social change. Overall, Millennials as a whole tend to become more actively involved in their communities and governments following any type of national or local tragedy.

Aside from the significant historical events noted in the preceding paragraph, Millennials have also been severely impacted by a series of current events concerning the economy. Though Millennials should be the highest paid group of workers to date, this generation was the most negatively affected by the recession than any other (White, 2016). Thanks to high rates of student loan debt, many Millennials put off significant milestones such as home ownership or marriage until much later in life (Davidson, 2014). Similarly, many Millennials are also reluctant to purchase consumer goods such as cars and instead opt to utilize services which allow access without the financial burden of ownership (Goldman Sachs, 2016). These experiences, coupled with “corporate and political malfeasance, downsizings, and layoffs” have trained Millennials to distrust “the system, doubt the judgment of managers, and not feel obligated in any way to one
In spite of the financial hardships and unfavorable career prospects, Millennials emphasize purpose over profit when it comes to pursuing potential careers.

As the previous generations were marked by significant events such as the Great Depression, the attacks on Pearl Harbor, or the assassination of John F. Kennedy, the Millennials are also shaped by the collective cultural experience which has occurred from 1980 onwards. Like the generations before them, Millennials still remain positive and progressive in thought (Heskett, 2007). The Millennials may actually be the most optimistic generation yet (Murphy, 2016). Despite the many setbacks and traumatic experiences this generation has faced, the Millennials refuse to give up. Collectively, they believe they are entitled to a better life and will not give up until they attain the lives they desire. These beliefs become readily apparent within the workplace, especially within the three realms that this literature review focuses on, which are as follows: recruitment, training, and management.

**Recruitment**

As mentioned in the Background section, Millennials embody several characteristics which conflict with typical military culture. Above anything else, the military is a conformist institution which emphasizes structure and self-sacrifice (Forsling, 2015). Some of the characteristics which conflict with this conformist culture include tendencies towards free thought and the desire to find themselves before achieving major personal and professional milestones (Steinberg, 2015). Millennials are also usually marked by a sense of entitlement and a desire for instant gratification (Howe, 2003). Similarly, Millennials tend to abide by the philosophy that they can be whatever they want to be and do whatever they want to do (Twenge, 2006). This philosophy affects all aspects of their lives, especially their careers.
As Millennials comprise 24% of the US population and will soon make up over 40% of the total workforce, it is essential that employers understand what attracts this generation to a particular career path (Olsen, 2015). Specifically, employers interested in hiring Millennials ought to consider ways in which they can highlight social connectedness, technology, and creativity (Human Resource Management Center, 2016). One effective way that employers can highlight these specific areas is through branding, which entails building a “distinguishable, quality reputation” (Stafford, 2008, p. 83). Millennials tend to pay close attention to branding, whether it pertains to “clothing and products or schools and employers” (Stafford, 2008, p. 83). Ultimately, employers must emplace recruiting practices that cater specifically to this group of potential job candidates, especially if they wish to remain competitive and attract the best talent.

In order to attract Millennial job candidates, potential employers in both the military and the civilian sectors must offer certain perks and benefits associated with employment. Specifically, Millennials want challenging work, advancement opportunities, and better pay (Andrews, 2016). They also want frequent feedback and clear guidance (Andrews, 2016). Millennials view jobs as growth opportunities and stepping stones (Rigoni, 2016). They seek opportunities with organizations such as those offered by the Peace Corps and Teach for America in unprecedented numbers (Fritzson, 2007). In spite of economic problems, Millennials are more than willing to shop around for the right job. Ultimately, it seems that employers need to work hard in order to attract Millennial job candidates.

There are many things that employers can do differently in order to attract Millennials. Organizations such as the United States Department of Defense (DoD) and all of its sub-branches actively research and implement the best practices for recruiting Millennials. Army recruiters alone have had to make several modifications to the overall message that they
broadcast potential soldiers. Whereas past recruitment of Generation X soldiers focused on risk and personal conquest, the current recruitment of Millennial soldiers emphasizes why we are at war in the first place (Mahoney, 2010). Army recruiters rely heavily on technology and social media to attract members of the Millennial generation (Elliot, 2011). Army recruiters also reach out to the primary influencers in Millennials’ lives, such as their teachers and parents (Jahner, 2015). More on this specific tactic and its significance will be discussed in the management section of this literature review. Ultimately, Army recruiters are willing to put in the time and effort to bring more Millennials into the Army. However, some recruiters are surely encountering Millennials that support the troops but have no desire to serve in uniform themselves.

As a result of dwindling enlistment figures, a number of studies consulted for this literature review concentrated exclusively on this generation’s attraction to military service. Perhaps the most well-known study within the military community, a poll conducted by the Harvard School of Politics, reveals that the majority of Millennials do support sending ground forces to combat the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (Perez, 2015). However, a large number of Millennials also indicated that they aren’t willing to personally join the fight, even if the US needed additional troops (Khalid, 2015). This sentiment is potentially connected to the Millennial tendency to allow others to resolve their conflicts for them, as stated in Chapter 1 of this research project.

According to the polling director, this lack of desire to serve is directly tied to the Millennial generation’s “significant degree of distrust…of all things related to the government” (Khalid, 2015). This distrust likely emerges from events such as those occurring on September 11, 2001 and the ensuing invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan. Others speculate that the lack of
desire to serve stems from the absence of a concrete threat, such as the Soviet Union or Nazi Germany (Connolly, 2016). Still, others believe that this reluctance to serve is instead tied to a general unfamiliarity of the military, its culture, its structure, and its function (Colford, 2016). Likewise, this unfamiliarity possibly breeds distrust. As Colford explains, without an understanding of

…military structure and culture, Millennials are liable to underappreciate the positive contributions of some service members, misattribute blame for failures to others, and, overall, fundamentally misconceive the nature of the military and its relationship with civilian policymakers and civil society. (2016)

Regardless of the precise origin of their reluctance to serve, a number of Millennials still join the Army despite these sentiments.

The Millennials who do join the Army tend to do so for personal benefit. Specifically, several extrinsic benefits such as educational opportunities, travel, and pay are the top motivators named by Millennials as to why they might consider the military as a viable job option (Hyler, 2013). On the other hand, Millennials believe that they will not attain their desired intrinsic benefits—such as flexibility and personal autonomy—while serving as soldiers in the Army (Hyler, 2013). Meanwhile, Army leaders and instructors are working to eliminate what little flexibility and autonomy exist during a given soldier’s first few months in the service by fostering an environment in which structure and discipline are emphasized above all else. This environment is prominent within the IET phase, which includes two separate schools at the minimum prior to arrival at one’s first duty assignment: Basic Combat Training (BCT) and Advanced Individual Training (AIT). This phase will be discussed in detail in the next section of this literature review.
Training

According to researchers at the CNA Corporation, both “employers and educators find it difficult to keep pace with the changes in attitudes, aptitudes, and expectations of Millennials as they emerge on the scene” (Stafford, 2008, p. 85). In response to the increasing presence of Millennial soldiers within the workforce, the Army is actively looking to increase discipline in its new recruits by planning to lengthen the amount of time in which soldiers interact with Drill Sergeants (Tan, 2016). Drill Sergeants are considered to be a “symbol of excellence…and the epitome of the Army as a profession;” thus they are the best example for a malleable Soldier to follow (US Army). They lead by example and engage in the same activities that their Soldiers do (Tilin, 2008). Currently, Soldiers interact with Drill Sergeants during BCT alone, which occurs during the first nine weeks of the IET phase. Now, under the new changes underway, Drill Sergeants will mentor and train Soldiers through AIT as well, thereby exposing Soldiers to their influence for an additional three months on average.

Increasing the length of time in which Drill Sergeants directly influence Soldiers is likely a smart move, as many current service members (including some Millennials) lament the present lack of discipline within the Army’s ranks (Lilley, 2016). In general, Millennials perform very well within a structured environment (Sportelli, 2015). This type of structure helps to create a clearly defined picture of the organization, which allows Millennials

… to more quickly recognize reachable areas that could be improved and understand current, and potentially past, procedures. A clearly defined structure helps Millennials to thoroughly evaluate potential improvements, and implications of such improvements, on the organization as a whole before recommending change (Farrell, 2014, p. 53).
Thus, fostering a structured environment helps Millennials to effectively engage with and eventually improve their respective organizations.

Similarly, Millennials typically prefer work settings in which coaching and feedback are constant and occur throughout a given project or activity (Brack, 2012). Managers may even opt to give their Millennial employees simple checklists, designated mentors, and occasional rewards (Gilbert, 2011). Further, Millennials desire to work in an interconnected environment in which creativity and initiative are encouraged (Fritzson, 2007). Therefore, Millennials are best suited for organizations that boast active, engaged leaders. Still, these leaders must first understand their Millennial employees in order to be at all successful in managing their careers.

One essential facet in understanding the Millennials involves knowing what they both want and need training in. According to the Hartford Millennial Leadership Survey, most Millennials want to receive training in the following subjects, listed in order of desire: leadership skills, technical skills, financial skills, personal development skills, career planning, and written and oral communications (Boulton, 2016). Moreover, Millennials want more than just engaging training; they want entertaining training (“Creating effective training”). Finally, more than anything, Millennials want managers who lead and inspire in all aspects of their formal job training.

Management

Contemporary leaders must take into account the different values, needs, and ways of doing things in order to successfully manage Millennials. According to members of the Pew Research Center, there are several unique characteristics regarding Millennials that their managers ought to consider. Some of these unique characteristics include the desire to achieve work/life balance, to attain educational goals, and to incorporate technology in all aspects of
one’s daily routine (Stafford, 2008). This list also includes the display of respect and genuine appreciation for employees (Stafford, 2008). With proper and informed management, all of the aforementioned traits can be leveraged to benefit the Millennial employees and ultimately the entire workplace.

One aspect of proper and informed management revolves around taking into account the primary influences in a given Millennial’s personal and professional life. Influencer roles—specifically, friends, family, and mentors—are critical to success (Stafford, 2008). Parents function as the primary influencers within a given Millennial’s life, as the majority of Millennials received more parental attention than their Generation X and Baby Boomer counterparts (Mahoney, 2010). Within the workplace, Millennials are often most inspired by their peers and coworkers more so than their managers (Case, 2015). However, the primary source of this inspiration does not typically manifest in the physical workplace itself; rather, it occurs as a result of engaging with their peers’ posts on social media (Morrison, 2014).

Similarly, Millennial managers tend to foster more collaborative environments than managers belonging to other generations (McCleary, 2016). Thus, through social networks like Facebook and LinkedIn, Millennials in both leader and subordinate positions possess the ability to profoundly impact the personal and professional lives of their peers on a global scale.

Interestingly enough, military and veteran influencers also play a large role in developing Millennials (Stafford, 2008). However, only 15 percent of Millennials’ parents have military experience (Tilghman, 2016). This makes the Army’s recruiting tactics, as discussed earlier in the recruitment section of this literature review, even more significant, as these tactics exploit pre-existing relationships with trusted individuals and influencers. Still, many Millennials will hold on to their values and look to their peers for guidance.
Millennials tend to have the same desires regarding work. More than anything, Millennials want a position that allows their passions and talents to be fulfilled (“Giving back,” 2014). Managers in both the military and civilian sectors must realize that Millennials do possess a number of positive traits, such as skills in technology and multi-tasking as well as tendencies towards collaboration and innovation (Moffatt, 2015). Managers and leaders must learn to harness and utilize the many positive skills and characteristics that Millennials bring to the workplace (Lulla, 2012). They may provide constructive criticism as well, albeit it must be delivered in a compassionate way in order to positively impact Millennial employees (Lilley, 2016). Ultimately, leaders of Millennials at all echelons will likely have to modify their management styles in order to best serve this generation.

There are many factors that leaders can consider in modifying their management styles to better suit the influx of Millennials in the workplace. One particular example of how a given leader can do this involves taking advantage of the Millennial tendency towards competition. Most Millennials compare their performance with that of their peers (“Myths about Millennials,” 2015). This act directly relates to this generation’s strong desire to receive attention and accolades (Zuckerman, 2014). Another example entails maintaining the willingness to explain the purpose behind certain choices to afford subordinates the opportunity to both buy-in and provide input (Steadman, 2016). Again, active and engaged leadership within the workplace is essential to retaining and managing Millennials.

Another course of action that a leader can follow revolves around taking into account how Millennials tend to disregard traditional hierarchies and authoritative structures in the workplace. One way to potentially combat this is for managers to assume a much more casual tone in the workplace (Groth, 2012). Alternatively, managers might also benefit from adopting a
management style more akin to servant leadership, which emphasizes people-first practices. According to Prindle, servant leadership is characterized by the

…commitment to serving the needs of others followed by a commitment to the personal and professional growth of every employee in the organization, a reliance on persuasion rather than positional authority, empathy, foresight, and the ability to conceptualize without losing the day-to-day operational perspective. (2010, p. 114)

In any case, Millennials ultimately place more weight on merit as opposed to tenure and therefore expect their leaders to act accordingly in an effort to tailor their management style towards this generation.

In addition to modifying their management styles, leaders must also change how they manage the policies, practices, and philosophies which retain Millennials in a given workplace. As mentioned in the recruitment sub-section of this literature review, Millennials desire specific perks in a career, such as work/life balance and advancement opportunities. Many leaders in the civilian sector have already taken these desires into account. For instance, some companies such as the professional social media network LinkedIn have gone as far as hiring Millennial consultants who advise managers on how to manage this particular generation (Manjoo, 2016). However, it is essential that managers continue to pay attention to all of the generations present within a given workplace.

This is especially true if the manager is also a Millennial. The number of Millennial managers in the military—including the Army’s junior Commissioned Officers comprising the ranks of Second Lieutenant, First Lieutenant, and Captain—will likely overtake the number of managers associated with other generations in the near future. As managers, Millennials are willing to try new things and challenge the status quo within the workplace (Evans, 2015). For
instance, Millennial managers are far more likely to place a greater emphasis on fostering better human relationships in the workplace (Evans, 2015). This could manifest in managers focusing on fostering emotional intelligence or subordinate empowerment.

**Conflicting Research**

Thousands of organizations are pouring their time, money, and efforts into researching Millennials. The majority of the resulting research coincides with the concepts discussed in the preceding sections of this literature review. However, research exists that directly conflicts with the core concept that Millennials are drastically different than members of other generations—specifically, members of Generation X and the Baby Boomers. Every generation is dubbed unique, yet there are far more similarities than there are differences.

According to researchers at IBM’s Institute for Business Value, Millennials’ career goals and aspirations are no different from those of the preceding generations. Millennials place the same weight on many of the same career goals that older employees do, including making a positive impact, solving challenging problems, and working in a diverse environment (Baird, 2015). The difference lies not in their desires but rather how each generation goes about fulfilling these desires. In short, Millennials aren’t afraid to ask for what they want, whereas previous generations merely kept quiet regarding their concerns.

**Summary**

There are several common themes present in the above literature review. These themes coincide with the majority of information presented on Millennial Soldiers within the Background section of this research paper. Specifically, Millennials strive to work the bare minimum hours, receive promotions as soon as possible, and question orders given by authority figures. Yet, Millennials also possess many positive characteristics that employers must learn to
leverage properly within the workplace. For instance, Millennials are optimistic and resilient. They seek rewarding challenges within the workplace. Thus, this literature demonstrates that Millennials have the potential to both benefit or bring harm to a given organization. Each of these themes is further explored as relevant to the Multifunctional Platoon later within the contents of this research project following the examination of the research data.
Chapter 3:

Research Methodology

Research Approach

The literature review addressed three areas of information regarding Millennials in the Army. These areas include recruitment, training, and management. While these three realms appear to have a profound impact on Millennial career progression, this research is focused on how the leaders of the Multifunctional Platoon are forced to adapt their management style in order to effectively accommodate and lead the Millennial soldiers. Through a qualitative research design, this research project examines the primary research question, which is as follows: in what ways does the Multifunctional Platoon leadership need to modify their management style to adjust to the Millennial soldiers in the Army?

Data Collection Approach and Procedures

Data Collected

This research project identifies how the Multifunctional Platoon’s leaders adapt their management styles and techniques to suit their Millennial soldiers. In order to answer the primary research question, the following sub-questions were addressed:

- What characteristics are unique to Millennial soldiers within the Multifunctional Platoon?
- In what ways do the Millennial soldiers in the Multifunctional Platoon experience their military service differently than soldiers associated with other generations?
- What work-related expectations and desires do the Millennials in the Multifunctional Platoon have?

Through a human subject study conducted via surveys and interviews, data was collected in order to advance the above research questions.
The topics covered within the surveys and interviews included those related to individual views, personal philosophies, management styles, and many other aspects as relevant to the management of Millennials in the Multifunctional Platoon. Descriptive data regarding the basic demographic profile of the Multifunctional Platoon, including age, length of service, and leadership experience, was also collected via these anonymous surveys, which will be discussed further in the following section.

**Data Collection Procedures**

Data collection procedures began with a thorough review of the existing literature on this matter, which provided a general overview of the research regarding managing Millennials. The literature review examined Millennial characteristics and desires in a broad context. As such, it offered a background against which to create the two surveys and the interviews that were used during the research process.

Two surveys were used in this research project. The first survey, created by the researcher, is in the form of the Likert scale. This survey targets all soldiers within the Multifunctional Platoon. This survey is designed to answer the second sub-question, which revolves around determining which characteristics are unique to the Millennials within the Multifunctional Platoon. The second survey, also created by the researcher and in the form of the Likert scale, also targets all soldiers within the Multifunctional Platoon. This survey aims to answer the other research sub-questions and abides by a line of questioning focused on the management of the Millennial soldiers in this platoon. Both surveys, along with the attached consent form, were distributed via paper handouts and all responses were recorded anonymously. All 35 soldiers within the Multifunctional Platoon were invited to participate in both of these surveys.

Through face-to-face interviews, a phenomenological study was conducted to discern
exactly how the Multifunctional Platoon’s leaders adapt their management styles in order to accommodate Millennial soldiers. Interviews were conducted with four of this platoon’s leaders, to include the Platoon Sergeant, a Team Leader, and two Squad Leaders. These four participants are co-workers and subordinates of the researcher. Approximately 8 questions were asked during each interview session, which were also audio taped provided that the participants gave consent. An informed consent was reviewed with each participant prior to conducting the interview. Participants were informed that their responses are to be kept confidential and will not harm them or their employment within the Multifunctional Platoon or the United States Army. Participants were also provided a copy of the interview questions prior to the interview date. Each interview lasted between 30 and 45 minutes. An invitation to participate in the interview, along with the informed consent and copy of the interview questions was sent to the participant’s electronic mailing address. Each participant was presented the option to complete the interview questions in writing and return to the researcher, in lieu of a face-to-face interview.

**Proposed Approach for Data Analysis**

Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data collected from the aforementioned surveys while qualitative analysis was used to analyze the data collected from the interviews. The data gathered through both the surveys and the interviews were analyzed using an online tool to determine a common theme among the responses. Statements that directly reflect the participant’s response to the generational conflict were identified and grouped into like categories. The data was also reviewed to determine the various ways that the participants responded to the questions and perceive generational conflict in the workplace. This information was then used to develop the typical perception of managing Millennials, as experienced by the leaders of the Multifunctional Platoon.
Methodological Limitations

Methodological limitations of this research project revolve around the very small sample population of the Multifunctional Platoon’s 35 soldiers. This renders the results as exclusive to this particular research project and the Multifunctional Platoon in its present state and composition.

Further, the survey questions and the interview questions were designed by the researcher for the purpose of collecting data for this research project alone. As such, these questions were not tested for reliability or validity. However, all questions developed by the researcher were influenced by the information gained during the review of the literature.
Chapter 4:

Data Analysis

Introduction

In order to answer the research questions presented in the preceding chapters, the researcher collected data on the Multifunctional Platoon using paper-based surveys and in-person subject matter expert interviews. During analysis, the researcher compared this data to the contents of the literature review and the specific categories explored in that particular chapter. This data will be presented as relevant to the Millennials of the Multifunctional Platoon and in accordance with the primary and sub-questions of this research project, which will serve as the sections of this chapter. The primary and sub-questions and sections of this chapter are as follows:

In what ways does the Multifunctional Platoon leadership need to modify their management style to adjust to the Millennial soldiers in the Army?

- What characteristics are unique to the Millennials within the Multifunctional Platoon?
- How do the Millennials in the Multifunctional Platoon tend to view their service in the military?
- What work-related expectations and desires do the Millennials in the Multifunctional Platoon have?

The data for both the surveys and the interviews will be presented simultaneously within the aforementioned sections.

In order to collect data to answer the above research questions, the researcher distributed two separate paper-based surveys (see Survey 1 and Survey 2 in Appendices C and D). Both of
these surveys were based on a Likert scale, with response selections for most questions ranging from Strongly Agree, Agree, Uncertain, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. For both surveys, the researcher distributed 35 paper copies to the 35 soldiers of the Multifunctional Platoon. Of these 35 surveys, the researcher received a total of 27 back, thus creating a response rate of 77%. Upon receipt of these surveys, the researcher uploaded the data into an online tool for analysis.

Survey 1 consisted of two parts. The first part concerned common characteristics of Millennials and the second part presented benefits that many Millennials typically find desirable. Survey 2 consisted of three parts. The first part of Survey 2 asked respondents to provide basic demographic information. The second and third parts both presented certain sentiments regarding work ethic, motivation, and fulfillment.

All 27 survey respondents were asked basic demographic questions in Survey 2. The first demographic question asked the approximate age of the respondent. 18 of the survey’s respondents are under 30 years old, while 9 respondents are age 30 or older. Though all are Millennials in accordance with the definition presented in the background section, the researcher wanted to know if there would be differences in thought between younger and older Millennials within the Multifunctional Platoon. The second demographic question concerns the respondent’s total length of Army service to date. The majority of respondents---12 to be exact---have served 4 to 8 years thus far. 8 respondents have served less than 4 years, 5 respondents have served more than 8 years, and 2 respondents opted out of answering. Finally, the last two demographic questions asked about the respondent’s personal leadership experience. 12 respondents have held or currently do hold a leadership position within the Multifunctional Platoon, while 13 do not and 2 prefer not to specify. Likewise, 19 respondents have held leadership positions in other organizations and 8 respondents have not.
The researcher also conducted one-on-one subject matter expert interviews (see Appendices E and F for the interview questions and a copy of the accompanying consent form) with 4 leaders in the platoon. Interview questions exclusively revolved around management issues within the Multifunctional Platoon. Leaders interviewed include 1 Team Leader, 2 Squad Leaders, and the Platoon Sergeant. These leaders will be referred to throughout the remainder of this research project as Interview Respondent A, B, C, and D, respectively.

**Data Presentation and Analysis**

*In what ways does the Multifunctional Platoon leadership need to modify their management style to adjust to the Millennial soldiers in the Army?*

According to Interview Respondent D, the Multifunctional Platoon’s leaders must micromanage their soldiers in order to accomplish the mission. This leader stated during the interview:

…I have had to change my management style completely. The way I was brought up in the Army you didn’t question your leadership no matter what. You took your ass chewing and learned from it and moved on. …you cannot do that with [Millennial] soldiers, it doesn’t work that way. Now you have to bring them in and chew them out quietly and explain how they will fix themselves. …it feels like we are spoon-feeding the soldiers the answers. [This] leads to another problem where soldiers expect to be given the answer when they screw up. They expect you as a leader to be there to tell them what to do when they screw up, but what happens in combat when [the leaders] die? These soldiers are not prepared to think on their own and make command decisions.
Based on the above answer from Respondent D, it is apparent that micromanaging these soldiers and providing on-the-spot answers poses severe consequences. These consequences, which revolve around the perceived inability to make command decisions, have the potential to affect both the current and future fighting force.

In addition to having to tell Millennial soldiers exactly what to do, the leaders of the Multifunctional Platoon find that they must answer to these soldiers as well. Respondent D laments that soldiers constantly ask “why” when given orders and sums up his sentiments on this matter with the following statement: “It almost feels that the leaders need to answer to their subordinates more than the subordinates need to answer to their leaders.” During the interviews, Respondent C pointed out that the Millennials in the Multifunctional Platoon have a tendency to challenge the authority of their leaders. According to this respondent, “it’s as if they know how to do it better, compared to their peers, compared to the seniors before them with the experience.” Essentially, Millennial soldiers---especially those in the junior ranks of Private through Specialist---are overly confident yet ill-equipped to execute in the absence of higher authorities.

According to Respondent C, this failure to effectively execute is exactly what drags the leaders of the Multifunctional Platoon down. Respondent C uses

…the analogy of a sinking ship with many holes. Of the ten aboard you will only have two that are plugging the leaks with their fingers. Try as they might, on a long enough timeline, the raft will take on too much water and all will drown.

After all, the Army is an organization that is driven by teamwork and collaboration. The success of any given mission depends on it. However, mission success also depends on self-sacrifice.
This is a characteristic that does not complement the many characteristics that are commonly associated with Millennials.

*What characteristics are unique to the Millennials within the Multifunctional Platoon?*

The first part of Survey 1 presented several characteristics commonly associated with Millennials and instructed respondents to indicate how strongly they personally associated that particular characteristic with the Millennials of the Multifunctional Platoon. The characteristics presented were a mixture of both positive and negative traits taken from the literature review. The characteristics are as follows: sensitive, confident, pressured, entitled, innovative, driven, lazy, passionate, open-minded, disrespectful, hard-working, selfish, socially conscious, tech-savvy, liberal, distrustful, optimistic, and connected. The results for each of these characteristics are depicted visually in the pie charts below (Figures 1-18).
Figure 6: Driven
- Strongly Agree: 37%
- Agree: 22%
- Uncertain: 4%
- Disagree: 22%
- Strongly Disagree: 15%

Figure 7: Lazy
- Strongly Agree: 31%
- Agree: 35%
- Uncertain: 8%
- Disagree: 19%
- Strongly Disagree: 8%
Figure 8: Passionate

- Strongly Agree: 33%
- Agree: 15%
- Uncertain: 7%
- Disagree: 11%
- Strongly Disagree: 33%

Figure 9: Open-Minded

- Strongly Agree: 44%
- Agree: 4%
- Uncertain: 11%
- Disagree: 4%
- Strongly Disagree: 37%
Figure 11 represents a significant conflict between the information gathered during the literature review and the responses to this survey. Likewise, the data in this pie chart conflicts with other survey responses, most notably the responses represented in Figure 7 for the alleged Millennial characteristic of being “lazy.”
As demonstrated in Figures 1-18, a wide variety of opinions on common Millennial characteristics exists within the Multifunctional Platoon. It is noteworthy that over half of the respondents---15 to be exact---specified during the survey that they do not view Millennials in a positive manner. Still, the survey respondents either strongly agree or agree that each aforementioned characteristic describe the Millennials in this platoon, even the characteristics that possess a positive connotation.

It is perhaps even more interesting that the majority of respondents do not personally identify as Millennials (Figure 19) and even distinguish themselves from the other Millennials in the Multifunctional Platoon (Figure 20). All 9 of the respondents that initially identified as being age 30 or older feel this way. It is possible that the soldiers in the Multifunctional Platoon feel this way simply because they do not identify with the characteristics commonly associated with Millennials. Similarly, it could also be due to a lack of knowledge concerning the precise birth dates associated with the Millennial generation.
Millennial characteristics were also discussed during the subject matter expert interviews. Respondent B made it clear that only a few of the Millennial soldiers in the Multifunctional Platoon truly warrant the negative connotation associated with Millennials. Those Millennial soldiers embody the mentality of a victim. This respondent goes on to say that these Millennial soldiers are “the product of a generation raised to think everyone has value and deserves the best,
regardless if they worked for anything or not.” Likewise, Respondent A observes that approximately half of the Multifunctional Platoon’s Millennial soldiers are respectful and hard-working, while the other half are entitled and arrogant. These two type of Millennials tend to clash and consequently detract from the Army’s primary goals of mission accomplishment and leader development. Likewise, these conflicts create problems for the Multifunctional Platoon’s leaders and take attention away from more important matters.

*How do the Millennials in the Multifunctional Platoon tend to view their service in the military?*

As presented in the literature review, the majority of Millennials who join the military tend to do so for personal benefit. For soldiers in the Multifunctional Platoon, the survey results indicate that this is not the case. According to the survey, the majority of soldiers in the Multifunctional Platoon joined the Army for altruistic reasons. As demonstrated in the pie chart below, more than half of survey respondents joined the Army to fulfill a desire to serve (Figure 21). Similarly, the majority of respondents—16 respondents—claim that they did not join the military primarily for benefits. An almost equal number of respondents—15 respondents—disagree with the statement that Millennials only want to work the bare minimum number of hours. Further, a total of 19 respondents agree that a sense of purpose is the most important factor in selecting a career path.
Though many of the Multifunctional Platoon’s soldiers find a sense of purpose desirable, it seems that an equal number of these soldiers feel both unchallenged and unfulfilled at work (Figures 22 and 23). Despite finding military service to be both unchallenging and unfulfilling, 19 respondents also believe that they are underpaid for their daily efforts in the Army.
What work-related expectations and desires do the Millennials in the Multifunctional Platoon have?

Many questions on both surveys were designed to discover what military leaders could offer in order to recruit and retain Millennial soldiers of the Multifunctional Platoon. These questions incorporated many tangible workplace benefits that many Millennials find desirable. Not surprisingly, the majority of respondents agreed that instant gratification, recognition, transparency, flexible working hours, meaningful work, opportunities for advancement, more vacation time, mentorship, technological modes of communication, and more free time on a daily basis are appealing to the Millennials of the Multifunctional Platoon.

According to the interview respondents, Millennials in the Multifunctional Platoon tend to expect that they are entitled to know everything. This entitlement carries over to all aspects of a given Multifunctional Platoon soldier’s career, especially matters concerning advancement. According to Respondent D, even mediocre soldiers expect to receive promotions and awards simply for showing up to work. Respondent B claims that some of the Multifunctional Platoon’s Millennial soldiers have “learned that they can manipulate the system…in order to take
advantage and go around what [the leadership] has planned.” This coincides with the information presented in the literature review, especially regarding Millennials and their desires for advancement and promotions.

Soldiers in the Multifunctional Platoon manipulate the system in many ways. Respondent D points out that if you don’t tell soldiers what they want to hear, then they will skip over members of the established chain of command and speak to a higher ranking authority figure until they receive their desired answer. “Jumping” the chain of command in this manner ultimately wastes the time of the Multifunctional Platoon leaders and strips them of their authority and decision-making ability.

Key Results

As demonstrated by the data presented in the preceding paragraphs, much of the research within the literature review is consistent with the results of the surveys and the interviews. The key results of the surveys and interviews revolve around the challenges that the leaders of the Multifunctional Platoon face. These challenges include needing to micromanage soldiers as well as dealing with entitlement in subordinates.

According to Respondent C, the origins of these challenges rest not only with the large Millennial presence in the contemporary Army. Rather, these challenges are partially due to the stress associated with constant warfare and the resulting decreased standards over the past decade. Combined with the large Millennial presence, these challenges possibly seem so prevalent and pervasive due to the Army’s recent transition away from the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and newfound focus on garrison operations.
Chapter 5:

Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Overview

The majority of the Army’s incoming soldiers are Millennials. These Millennials pose new issues for the Army’s leaders, who are now compelled to adapt their management styles in order to effectively lead this new generation of soldiers. Using the leaders and soldiers of the Multifunctional Platoon as a sample, this research project’s primary purpose was to determine exactly how leaders must modify their leadership styles. To determine this, the researcher addressed the primary research question and its related sub-questions throughout this project. The primary and sub-questions are as follows:

In what ways does the Multifunctional Platoon leadership need to modify their management style to adjust to the Millennial soldiers in the Army?

- What characteristics are unique to the Millennials within the Multifunctional Platoon?
- How do the Millennials in the Multifunctional Platoon tend to view their service in the military?
- What work-related expectations and desires do the Millennials in the Multifunctional Platoon have?

Summary

This summary includes a recollection of key points from the literature review and the data analysis. These key points and major findings are then analyzed in detail with regard to their applicability to the aforementioned research question and its sub-questions. This summary also
closely intertwines with the subsequent and final sections of this research paper: the conclusions and the recommendations.

As presented earlier in the literature review, Millennials in the military possess several characteristics that ultimately conflict with traditional military customs and processes. These characteristics include a sense of entitlement, a desire for instant gratification, and the willingness to let others solve their problems for them. Ultimately, the survey and interview data confirm these characteristics, as well as many other positive and negative tendencies that seem specific to the majority of Millennials.

Along with these characteristics, Millennials also exhibit several desires. Millennials desire fulfilling work and usually emphasize purpose over profit with regards to career selection. Likewise, they long to work in an environment in which coaching and feedback are consistent. They want to be surrounded by approachable leaders who function first and foremost as mentors. They want to receive promotions and advancement opportunities as soon as possible, with little regard for the amount of time and effort they have put forth in a given job. They also want challenging work and better pay.

However, the Millennials of the Multifunctional Platoon do exhibit some traits that conflict with the contents of the literature review. The most notable trait that the Multifunctional Platoon’s Millennials fail to share with other Millennials is their willingness to work beyond the bare minimum of required hours. This could potentially be tied in with the strong will to fulfill a desire to serve displayed by the Multifunctional Platoon’s soldiers, as discussed in the previous chapter with the rest of the survey results.

One issue that was not addressed in the literature review but that manifested in the data collection concerns the consequences of being overly confident. The Millennial soldiers assume
that they know better than their leaders. They also assume that the leaders of the Multifunctional Platoon exist exclusively for them—to mentor them and help them grow into leaders themselves. In reality, that’s only part of their role. Military leaders exist to plan, to give orders, and to provide purpose. The junior soldiers exist to execute and learn from their experiences until they one day are in a position of authority.

Conclusions

As presented in the preceding section, the data from both the surveys and the interviews was mostly consistent with the information presented in the literature review. The survey responses confirm the Millennial characteristics and desires outlined in the literature review. Likewise, the interview responses did confirm that Multifunctional Platoon leaders do experience a great deal of challenges as a result of the Millennials serving in subordinate positions. These challenges include micromanaging soldiers and constantly being questioned by subordinates. These are challenges that some Army leaders are not yet accustomed to.

Ultimately, the Multifunctional Platoon and the Army in general are unique organizations for leaders to grow and develop in. According to the leadership manual published by the Department of the Army, the Army

…is set apart from other professions because soldiers must be prepared to use deadly force and have the courage to overcome hostile forces. Army leaders exercise a profound responsibility because the consequences of their decisions and actions affect the lives of their soldiers, their families, enemies, and non-combatants. (2012, p.1)

Army leaders are equipped to rise to any challenge, whether it revolves around an enemy combatant or an insubordinate soldier. While these leaders may not be accustomed to managing
Millennials, this is a surely a problem that they can overcome by adhering to the below recommendations outlined by the researcher.

**Recommendations**

This research project provides data that can be helpful to the leaders of the Multifunctional Platoon in their endeavors to effectively manage their Millennial soldiers. Based on the literature review, survey results, and interview answers, the researcher recommends that the Multifunctional Platoon leaders take the time to analyze these results and consider the recommendations presented in the subsequent paragraphs.

The challenges associated with managing Millennials are not insurmountable. These challenges can be tackled at an organization-wide level as well as by an individual platoon. As mentioned in both the background section and the literature review, the Army and other DoD agencies are currently conducting extensive research on the matter of Millennials in the military in an attempt to determine how to best approach the problems related to their presence. At present, much of their research is being put into practice in the Army, specifically through more comprehensive leadership training and retaining Drill Sergeants beyond Basic Combat Training. However, the Army could also enact better screening processes when dealing with incoming recruits at the various Military Entrance Processing Stations (MEPS) throughout the United States. Such a screening process could potentially mitigate allowing entry to those who embody traits that directly conflict with selfless service in the Army. If enacted, it would only be a matter of time until these efforts impact and potentially benefit the Multifunctional Platoon.

For the leaders of the Multifunctional Platoon, the resolutions to the aforementioned challenges rest in additional leadership training and further clarification of managerial roles in the military. The Multifunctional Platoon leaders cannot rely exclusively on their position to get
Millennial soldiers to follow them. Rather, the Multifunctional Platoon leaders must exhibit leadership ability in a way that Millennial soldiers can relate to. As evident by data presented in the previous chapter, Millennials relate to and respect leaders that function primarily as mentors. As authority figures in the military, the leaders of the Multifunctional Platoon must first influence their subordinates to accomplish the mission through mentorship. Mentorship is an essential element of military leadership at all echelons and can be used to effectively provide purpose, direction, and motivation. As mentors, the Multifunctional Platoon leaders can take advantage of their position by shaping their subordinates to better conform to the Army values. It is also possible to be a mentor and still retain authority. As mentors, the Multifunctional Platoon leaders can take advantage of their position and authority by shaping their subordinates to better conform to the Army values.

In addition to clarifying the role of an Army leader, the Multifunctional Platoon leaders must establish boundaries. Millennials in the Multifunctional Platoon often ignore the established chain of command when it comes to communication and tend to go directly to the Platoon Sergeant or the Platoon Leader instead of their assigned Team Leader or Squad Leader. Skipping the established chain of command has become increasingly easier with the advent and daily use of technology throughout the Army. Regardless, the leaders of the Multifunctional Platoon must enforce utilizing the chain of command and create consequences for those who do not.

When establishing boundaries, the leaders of the Multifunctional Platoon must create consequences for the soldiers that fail to conform to the Army’s standards. After all, the soldiers subordinate to these leaders must learn what behaviors are considered acceptable and appropriate in the Army. In the Army, this is usually done by counseling subordinates and documenting the issues on paper in order to pursue punishment or corrective training. Through counseling,
standards can be set and ultimately enforced in order to prevent the constant questioning of authority and manipulation of the system. Also through counseling, the Uniform Code of Military Justice can be applied and soldiers who are truly resistant to the Army’s way of life can be legally separated from service.

Ultimately, the Multifunctional Platoon’s leaders must learn to strike a balance between the Army’s traditions and the Millennial culture. This balance includes adopting practices to accommodate the Millennial generation while preserving the many military customs and courtesies. In addition to the methods outlined above, this balance can be created through explaining exactly how Millennials fit into the longstanding Army traditions, thus fostering a link between this generation and the previous ones based on the similar drive to serve a larger purpose.

**Recommendations for Further Research**

Upon receipt of the survey responses, the researcher realized that the questions created several information gaps that could have been resolved through additional research and questioning. Future surveys on this topic should feature more open-ended options which would allow respondents to be more specific on certain thoughts and experiences. For instance, an open-ended question would have been more helpful in determining the reason why the majority of the Multifunctional Platoon’s soldiers do not identify as Millennials.
References


proceedings/2014-08/now-hear-millennials-bring-new-mentality-does-it-fit


Human Resource Management Center. (2016). Millennial myths vs. reality: How to engage and


Appendix A:

Permission Letter

AFZH-INA-D 1 September 2016

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: Research Permission Letter for 1LT Jessica Smith

1. 1LT Smith, Jessica (xxx-xx-1286) is authorized to use the soldiers in the Multifunctional Platoon as subjects in her graduate research project. As part of this research project, she is authorized to distribute surveys and conduct interviews with these soldiers.

2. The following stipulations should be observed: both the surveys and interviews must be completed during off-duty periods and must not interfere with any of the Multifunctional Platoon’s missions or training events.

3. The point of contact for this memorandum is the undersigned at (253) 967-6942 or truong.q.tran.mil@mail.mil.

//ORIGINAL SIGNED//
TRUONG Q. TRAN
CPT, MI
Commanding
Appendix B:

Survey Cover Letter

September 8, 2016

Dear Participant:

My name is Jessica Smith and I am a graduate student at Central Michigan University. For my final project, I am examining how Millennial soldiers are managed within the United States Army—specifically the Multifunctional Platoon. Because you are a soldier within this platoon, I am inviting you to participate in this research study by completing the attached survey.

The following questionnaire will require approximately 15-20 minutes to complete. There is no compensation for responding nor is there any known risk. In order to ensure that all information will remain confidential, please do not include your name. Copies of the project will be provided to my Central Michigan University instructor and to our Company Commander. If you choose to participate in this project, please answer all questions as honestly as possible and return the completed questionnaires promptly to the designated box in the squad leader’s office. Participation is strictly voluntary and you may refuse to participate at any time. Although I am your Platoon Leader, please note that your position is not in jeopardy if you decide not to participate in this study, as I will have no way of knowing who participated and who did not.

Thank you for taking the time to assist me in my educational endeavors. The data collected will provide useful information on my topic. If you would like a copy of this study, please complete and detach the Request for Information Form and return it to me in a separate envelope. Completion and return of the questionnaire will indicate your willingness to participate in this study. If you require additional information or have questions, please contact me at the number listed below.

Please note that if you are not satisfied with the manner in which this study is being conducted, you may report (anonymously if you so choose) any complaints to the MSA Program by calling 989-774-6525 or addressing a letter to the MSA Program, Rowe 222, Central Michigan University, Mt. Pleasant, MI 48859.

Sincerely,

Jessica Smith
jessicasmith722@icloud.com or (808) 927-1178
Patricia Kelley
kelle1pa@cmich.edu or (941) 575-1161

Detach here

(This request for information form is an optional part of the cover letter and is not required for RRA approval.)

Request for Information

Please send a copy of the study results to the address listed below.

Name:

Address:

Please do not return this form with your survey. Return to: Jessica Smith at jessicasmith722@icloud.com
Appendix C:

Survey 1

Section 1:
Instructions: This portion of the survey lists various characteristics. Please select how strongly you believe each characteristic accurately describes the Millennial generation as a whole.

1. Sensitive
   a. Definitely describes
   b. Somewhat describes
   c. Uncertain
   d. Doesn’t really describe
   e. Definitely doesn’t describe

2. Confident
   a. Definitely describes
   b. Somewhat describes
   c. Uncertain
   d. Doesn’t really describe
   e. Definitely doesn’t describe

3. Pressured
   a. Definitely describes
   b. Somewhat describes
   c. Uncertain
   d. Doesn’t really describe
   e. Definitely doesn’t describe

4. Entitled
   a. Definitely describes
   b. Somewhat describes
   c. Uncertain
   d. Doesn’t really describe
   e. Definitely doesn’t describe

5. Innovative
   a. Definitely describes
   b. Somewhat describes
   c. Uncertain
   d. Doesn’t really describe
   e. Definitely doesn’t describe

6. Driven
   a. Definitely describes
   b. Somewhat describes
c. Uncertain
d. Doesn’t really describe
e. Definitely doesn’t describe

7. Lazy
a. Definitely describes
b. Somewhat describes
c. Uncertain
d. Doesn’t really describe
e. Definitely doesn’t describe

8. Passionate
a. Definitely describes
b. Somewhat describes
c. Uncertain
d. Doesn’t really describe
e. Definitely doesn’t describe

9. Open-minded
a. Definitely describes
b. Somewhat describes
c. Uncertain
d. Doesn’t really describe
e. Definitely doesn’t describe

10. Disrespectful
a. Definitely describes
b. Somewhat describes
c. Uncertain
d. Doesn’t really describe
e. Definitely doesn’t describe

11. Hard-working
a. Definitely describes
b. Somewhat describes
c. Uncertain
d. Doesn’t really describe
e. Definitely doesn’t describe

12. Selfish
a. Definitely describes
b. Somewhat describes
c. Uncertain
d. Doesn’t really describe
e. Definitely doesn’t describe
13. Socially conscious
   a. Definitely describes
   b. Somewhat describes
   c. Uncertain
   d. Doesn’t really describe
   e. Definitely doesn’t describe

14. Tech-savvy
   a. Definitely describes
   b. Somewhat describes
   c. Uncertain
   d. Doesn’t really describe
   e. Definitely doesn’t describe

15. Liberal
   a. Definitely describes
   b. Somewhat describes
   c. Uncertain
   d. Doesn’t really describe
   e. Definitely doesn’t describe

16. Distrustful
   a. Definitely describes
   b. Somewhat describes
   c. Uncertain
   d. Doesn’t really describe
   e. Definitely doesn’t describe

17. Optimistic
   a. Definitely describes
   b. Somewhat describes
   c. Uncertain
   d. Doesn’t really describe
   e. Definitely doesn’t describe

18. Connected
   a. Definitely describes
   b. Somewhat describes
   c. Uncertain
   d. Doesn’t really describe
   e. Definitely doesn’t describe
Section 2:
Instructions: This portion of the survey lists various intangibles. Please select how strongly you believe each intangible appears desirable to Millennials.

1. Instant gratification
   a. Very desirable
   b. Somewhat desirable
   c. Uncertain
   d. Somewhat undesirable
   e. Definitely undesirable

2. Recognition
   a. Very desirable
   b. Somewhat desirable
   c. Uncertain
   d. Somewhat undesirable
   e. Definitely undesirable

3. Transparency
   a. Very desirable
   b. Somewhat desirable
   c. Uncertain
   d. Somewhat undesirable
   e. Definitely undesirable

4. Flexible working hours
   a. Very desirable
   b. Somewhat desirable
   c. Uncertain
   d. Somewhat undesirable
   e. Definitely undesirable

5. Meaningful work
   a. Very desirable
   b. Somewhat desirable
   c. Uncertain
   d. Somewhat undesirable
   e. Definitely undesirable

6. Opportunities for advancement
   a. Very desirable
   b. Somewhat desirable
   c. Uncertain
   d. Somewhat undesirable
   e. Definitely undesirable
7. More vacation time
   a. Very desirable
   b. Somewhat desirable
   c. Uncertain
   d. Somewhat undesirable
   e. Definitely undesirable

8. Mentorship
   a. Very desirable
   b. Somewhat desirable
   c. Uncertain
   d. Somewhat undesirable
   e. Definitely undesirable

9. Technological modes of communication
   a. Very desirable
   b. Somewhat desirable
   c. Uncertain
   d. Somewhat undesirable
   e. Definitely undesirable

10. More free time on a daily basis
    a. Very desirable
    b. Somewhat desirable
    c. Uncertain
    d. Somewhat undesirable
    e. Definitely undesirable
Appendix D:

Survey 2

Section 1:
Instructions: Please select the best response to each question.

1. What is your age?
   a. Under 30
   b. 30 or older
   c. Prefer not to say

2. Please select your total length of service in the Army to date.
   a. Less than 4 years
   b. 4 to 8 years
   c. More than 8 years
   d. Prefer not to say

4. Do you now or have you ever held a leadership position in the Multifunctional Platoon?
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. Prefer not to say

5. Have you ever held a leadership position in any other type of organization (including non-military organizations)?
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. Prefer not to say

Section 2:
Instructions: Please select the answer the best represents your reaction to the statement provided?

1. My views of Millennials are positive.
   a. Strongly agree
   b. Agree
   c. Uncertain
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly disagree

2. Money is the most important factor in choosing a job.
   a. Strongly agree
   b. Agree
   c. Uncertain
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly disagree
3. I joined the military primarily for the benefits.
   a. Strongly agree
   b. Agree
   c. Uncertain
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly disagree

4. I joined the military primarily to fulfill a desire to serve.
   a. Strongly agree
   b. Agree
   c. Uncertain
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly disagree

5. I find military service to be easy.
   a. Strongly agree
   b. Agree
   c. Uncertain
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly disagree

6. The military’s customs and courtesies are outdated.
   a. Strongly agree
   b. Agree
   c. Uncertain
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly disagree

7. I believe that I am too qualified for my current position.
   a. Strongly agree
   b. Agree
   c. Uncertain
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly disagree

8. A sense of purpose is the most important factor in choosing a job.
   a. Strongly agree
   b. Agree
   c. Uncertain
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly disagree

9. I am not like the other Millennials at work.
   a. Strongly agree
   b. Agree
   c. Uncertain
MANAGING MILLENNIALS IN THE MILITARY

10. I want to work only the bare minimum number of hours.
   a. Strongly agree
   b. Agree
   c. Uncertain
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly disagree

Section 3:
Instructions: Please select the answer that best represents your reaction to the statement provided.

1. I consider the military to be just like any other job.
   a. Strongly agree
   b. Agree
   c. Uncertain
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly disagree

2. I am fulfilled by my work.
   a. Strongly agree
   b. Agree
   c. Uncertain
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly disagree

3. My leaders value my contributions.
   a. Strongly agree
   b. Agree
   c. Uncertain
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly disagree

4. I am underpaid for my efforts.
   a. Strongly agree
   b. Agree
   c. Uncertain
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly disagree

5. I have a hard time respecting my superiors.
   a. Strongly agree
   b. Agree
   c. Uncertain
   d. Disagree
e. Strongly disagree

6. Most soldiers these days are entitled.
a. Strongly agree
b. Agree
c. Uncertain
d. Disagree
e. Strongly disagree

7. I am most motivated by leaders who act like mentors.
a. Strongly agree
b. Agree
c. Uncertain
d. Disagree
e. Strongly disagree

8. The Army has changed for the worse in the past few years.
a. Strongly agree
b. Agree
c. Uncertain
d. Disagree
e. Strongly disagree

9. My leadership skills are not fully developed at work.
a. Strongly agree
b. Agree
c. Uncertain
d. Disagree
e. Strongly disagree

10. I prefer highly structured environments.
a. Strongly agree
b. Agree
c. Uncertain
d. Disagree
e. Strongly disagree

11. I do not identify as a Millennial.
a. Strongly agree
b. Agree
c. Uncertain
d. Disagree
e. Strongly disagree

12. I am not being challenged at work.
a. Strongly agree
b. Agree
c. Uncertain
d. Disagree
e. Strongly disagree

13. I believe that the military’s rank structure and promotion system is outdated.
a. Strongly agree
b. Agree
c. Uncertain
d. Disagree
e. Strongly disagree

14. My leaders go out of their way to meet my needs.
a. Strongly agree
b. Agree
c. Uncertain
d. Disagree
e. Strongly disagree

15. Millennials are efficient soldiers.
a. Strongly agree
b. Agree
c. Uncertain
d. Disagree
e. Strongly disagree
Appendix E:

Adult Consent Form

Study Title: The Impact of Generational Change: Managing Millennials in the Military

Student’s Name and Department: Jessica Smith, MSA
jessicasmith722@icloud.com or (808) 927-1178

Instructor’s Name and Department: Patricia Kelley, MSA
kelle1pa@cmich.edu or (941) 575-1161

Introductory Statement

This study focuses on the management of Millennial soldiers within a given platoon in the United States Army. This study is part of a capstone requirement within the Master of Science in Administration program at Central Michigan University.

What is the purpose of this study? As mentioned in the preceding paragraph, the purpose of this study is to determine the following primary research question: in what ways do Army leaders need to modify their management styles in order to accommodate Millennial soldiers?

What will I do in this study? If you decide to participate in this research project, I will go over this consent form, ask your permission to tape the interview, and then go through a series of interview questions about my research topic. Although I am your Platoon Leader, your participation in this interview is voluntary and you may stop the interview at any time.

If you give permission for the interview to be taped, please sign here:________________

Alternative: If you do not wish the interview to be taped, please sign here:_________

How long will it take me to do this? Approximately 25-40 minutes.

Are there any risks of participating in the study? There are no risks associated with participating in this study.

What are the benefits of participating in the study? Your participation in this study could potentially drive change within the platoon or even the entire Army.

Will anyone know what I do or say in this study (Confidentiality)? Within the final research project, interview subjects will not be mentioned by name; rather they will be referred to as Respondent A, Respondent B, and so on and so forth. Only the researcher, the course instructor, and project reviewer will have access to your personal information.

Will I receive any compensation for participation? No.

Who can I contact for information about this study? You can contact the researcher at:
Jessica Smith
jessicasmith722@icloud.com
(808) 927-1178

You are free to refuse to participate in this research project or to withdraw your consent and discontinue participation in the project at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Your participation will not affect your relationship with the institution(s) involved in this research project.
Please note that if you are not satisfied with the manner in which this study is being conducted, you may report (anonymously if you so choose) any complaints to the MSA Program by calling 989-774-6525 or addressing a letter to the MSA Program, Rowe 222, Central Michigan University, Mt. Pleasant, MI 48859.

My signature below indicates that all my questions have been answered. I agree to participate in the project as described above.

______________________________  __________________
Signature of Subject            Date Signed

A copy of this form has been given to me. _________ Subject’s Initials

______________________________  __________________
Signature of Responsible Investigator Date Signed
Appendix F:

Interview Questions

• Please briefly describe your leadership experience as relevant to the United States Army.
• How do you personally view the Millennials in the platoon?
• In your opinion, how does the increased presence of Millennial soldiers affect the platoon’s leadership (to include all TLs/SLs/PSG/PL)?
• How have you, as a leader, been forced to adapt your management style to accommodate the Millennials in this platoon? Please be as specific as possible.
• What affect does this have on you? On the other soldiers?
• Overall, how are Millennials changing the Army? (if at all)
• Are there any other ways that the platoon’s leaders are forced to adapt as a result of the Millennials in the lower ranks? Or as a result of the Millennials in the higher ranks? (for instance, the PL/PSG and/or senior SLs)
• In what ways do the Millennial soldiers experience their work life differently than soldiers associated with other generations? (if at all)
Appendix G:

Multifunctional Platoon Composition

The following Multifunctional Platoon composition consists of key information relevant to this research project, including the position, rank, and birth year for each soldier within the platoon. This information demonstrates that all soldiers currently serving in the Multifunctional Platoon are Millennials in accordance with the definition presented in the first chapter of this research project.

Platoon Leadership:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Birth Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Lieutenant</td>
<td>Platoon Leader</td>
<td>1988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Sergeant</td>
<td>Platoon Sergeant</td>
<td>1987</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Squad 1:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Birth Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SGT</td>
<td>Squad Leader</td>
<td>1983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SGT</td>
<td>Team Leader</td>
<td>1987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPC</td>
<td>Soldier</td>
<td>1990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPC</td>
<td>Team Leader</td>
<td>1989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPC</td>
<td>Soldier</td>
<td>1984</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1992</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Squad 2:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Birth Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SGT</td>
<td>Squad Leader</td>
<td>1987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPC</td>
<td>Team Leader</td>
<td>1989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPC</td>
<td>Soldier</td>
<td>1989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SGT</td>
<td>Team Leader</td>
<td>1991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPL</td>
<td>Soldier</td>
<td>1989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPC</td>
<td>Soldier</td>
<td>1991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1993</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Squad 3:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Squad Leader</td>
<td>SGT</td>
<td>1987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Leader</td>
<td>SPC</td>
<td>1991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soldier</td>
<td>SPC</td>
<td>1992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Leader</td>
<td>SGT</td>
<td>1990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soldier</td>
<td>SPC</td>
<td>1983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soldier</td>
<td>SPC</td>
<td>1987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soldier</td>
<td>SPC</td>
<td>1991</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Squad 4:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Year</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Squad Leader</td>
<td>SSG</td>
<td>1986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soldier</td>
<td>SPC</td>
<td>1985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soldier</td>
<td>Private First Class (PFC)</td>
<td>1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soldier</td>
<td>Private (PV2)</td>
<td>1995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Leader</td>
<td>SSG</td>
<td>1982</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soldier</td>
<td>SGT</td>
<td>1980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soldier</td>
<td>SPC</td>
<td>1992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical Advisor</td>
<td>Chief Warrant Officer (CW2)</td>
<td>1981</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical Advisor</td>
<td>CW2</td>
<td>1985</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix H: Research Review Application Approval

Dear Jessica,

Your Research Review Application has been reviewed and approved. You may start your data collection. This approval will not expire as long as your topic and methodology remain unchanged. If your topic or methodology changes, please submit a new Research Review Application and supporting documents to your instructor by e-mail.

Please contact your instructor if you have any questions. Also, be sure to check with your instructor concerning the due dates for your project.

Good luck with your project. This is the only notification you will receive. Please keep a copy for your records.

Kim Gribben
Assistant Director, MSA Program

Christina Prout
Administrative Secretary Master of Science in Administration Program
Rowe 222 | Central Michigan University | Mount Pleasant, MI 48859