

# ***“The Joint Staff Officer Project”***

## **Final Report**



**April 2008  
Developed by  
Joint Staff J-7 / Joint Training  
Division**

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# Joint Staff Officer Final Report

## Executive Summary

In March 2006, Joint Staff J-7 Joint Exercise and Training Division (JETD) initiated a three-phased project to determine the competencies joint staff officers need for successful job performance. This project was initiated due to continuing requests from the Combatant Commands for targeted training to properly prepare officers to work at the proficiency levels needed within an executive level joint environment. The front end analysis, conducted in two phases across the nine Combatant Command Headquarters, is focused on identifying required knowledge, skills, abilities, and attitudes that can: (1) minimize the learning curve of new staff officers, and (2) improve accuracy, quality, and competency of job performance. The first phase of the study was conducted via on-site discussions with over 300 representative staff officers and leaders; the second phase was conducted via survey with over 1550 responses from staff officers and senior leaders from all the commands. This report is a combination of the data results from Phases One and Two. Phase Three will be focused on solutions for needed individual training as identified in Phases One and Two.

Questions for the discussion groups and the survey focused on job-specific data such as required outputs and products; technologies, systems and tools required for tasks; task management processes; training, education, and service experiences relevant to staff officer work; and organizational and systemic influences. Hale's Human Performance model, which focuses on three areas affecting job performance -- *organizational factors*, *job criteria*, and *individual skills* -- provided the construct for the study. Some of the organizational factors that affect staff officer tasks cannot be controlled; world events drive pace, content, and priorities. However, organizational processes, such as streamlining internal work flow, focused training on required tools (e.g., tasking management systems), and standardization of product formats can make significant positive improvements in volume of work completed and in the quality of products developed. Staff officers and senior leaders made a number of recommendations for improving the staffing process for the commands and the directorates in the areas of administration and coordination procedures, leadership and guidance, technology improvements, and command-specific and directorate-generated training.

Very few formal job descriptions were provided for the study; personnel said the descriptions either did not exist or did not really match job requirements. Collected data from the current joint staff officers provides an informal job description, however, for joint staff officer positions, and were fairly consistent across the commands with regard to work products, technologies used, and

required work tasks. Senior leaders provided input on joint staff officer strengths and weaknesses, and identified the competencies they would like to see in staff officers as they arrive for duty. Currently, according to the e-JMAPS tables and input from the commands there are approximately 3,900 authorized, approved staff officer billets in nine of the Combatant Commands (newly created USAFRICOM was not a part of the study). These billets can be filled with personnel one grade higher or lower, so because of rotations and the difficulty of pinning down an exact number of officers the authorized billet data as derived from e-JMAPS was used to determine the current joint staff officer numbers by command. Survey respondents represent 37% of the current population of joint staff officers. Respondents were well matched proportionately by grade, directorate, command and time in billet to the authorized, approved billet count for providing a valid profile of the work requirements for joint staff officers.

Survey findings validate senior leaders' concerns that staff officers arrive to the Combatant Commands without, in most cases, the fundamental knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform at a high proficiency level. Survey results show the following information:

- **49.3%** of the authorized HQ billets are grades **O-4 and below**, the least experienced, least trained and educated personnel on the staff; the probability is very high that the percentage of personnel serving in these slots is even greater because billets may be filled with personnel one grade below the designated rank;
- **68%** of survey respondents (971 officers) are in their first joint assignments (with proportionately as many O-6s and O-5s as junior officers);
- Only **22.7%** of survey respondents (302 officers) have completed JPME II (the 10 or 12 week JFSC course); some attended during tour instead of before; both staff officers and senior leaders consistently stated their personal opinions that attendance prior to assignment would have been extremely useful.
- **40%** of survey respondents report working **50 to 60** or more hours per week;
- **63%** of survey respondents report their ramp up time (learning curve) is seven or more months.

Additionally the commands reported that because of varying global events and two wars, rotations are shorter for many active duty personnel; high numbers of Reservists and Guard members, who rotate every 6 to 12 months, are serving in staff officer slots as well. A very large portion of combatant command staff officers do not have the formal training or education, nor the military background and experience, to perform at expected proficiency levels.

Currently very little focused training or education currently exists for preparing officers to serve in a strategically focused Combatant Command. Participants consistently stated that joint specialized training is needed before, or soon after,

arrival to a command, and, if provided, would make a marked difference in their ability to quickly perform at the high proficiency and effectiveness levels expected of them. Staff officers across all Combatant Commands claim that although the learning curve is on average seven months, it could be up to two years or more, depending on a number of variables such as collateral duties, regional issues, and relevant experience, training, and education brought to the job. In fact, *25% of survey respondents reported needing 10 months to two years to be able to effectively perform their jobs.*

Based on the proportion of grades O-4 and below serving in joint staff officer positions, the lack of JPME attendance, the lack of joint knowledge specific training available, and the high proportion of officers serving in their first joint assignments, it is understandable why senior leaders are concerned about staff officers' abilities to perform well in a strategic environment.

## **Joint Staff Officer Competencies**

When senior leaders across the Combatant Commands were asked to describe the ideal joint staff officer, they shared an expectation that joint staff officers should be able to exhibit with a high level of proficiency the skills, behaviors, and attributes required to work in an executive level within their commands. Leadership understands that some of the requisite training should take place upon arriving within the command, (e.g., command-specific requirements, regional updates, mission-specific training), but feel that the majority of knowledge and skills could and should be taught prior to a staff officer's arrival. In general, leaders expect staff officers to be able to manage large volumes of materials, know the workflow of the command, and successfully move staffing packages up to the appropriate command level for signature. To do this efficiently requires a broad background of knowledge, an ***advanced*** level of specific skill sets (writing, briefing, and interpersonal skills), and some attitudinal behaviors that are very different from the tasks staff officers have performed for prior tactical and operational assignments.

One of the most important skill sets for joint staff officers, according to leadership, is the ability to accurately assess a task, research appropriate background information, concisely provide optional courses of actions, make recommendations to senior leaders, and factually support recommendations. Leadership also feels there is a significant difference in the type of interpersonal skills needed at the strategic staffing level when compared to the operational or tactical staffing levels. Working in a joint environment rather than a predominantly service environment requires a more collaborative approach to staffing tasks, than an "I command you" approach. Senior leaders in both the site discussions and survey responses provided a capabilities profile of the ideal joint staff officer which includes personal attributes conducive to staff work, joint service capabilities and knowledge, possessing and applying a joint mindset,

high proficiency in business and professional skills, lifelong learning skills, and leadership and management skills for working in a joint, high-paced, customer focused environment. A more detailed list with subsets of each category is listed in Section 6 of this report.

Feedback from senior leaders and staff officers across all nine Combatant Commands identified fifteen common competencies necessary for staff officers. These competencies, as summarized below form the foundation for identifying and developing the much needed targeted training and education for developing requisite knowledge, skills, abilities, and attributes expected of joint staff officers.

- **Competency #1:** *Understands the role of a joint staff officer, and performs work requirements consistently at a high level of proficiency*
- **Competency #2:** *Understands the organization and missions of the nine Combatant Commands*
- **Competency #3:** *Exhibits joint and command-level mindset and knowledge and applies them to all work products and services*
- **Competency #4:** *Highly knowledgeable of his/her Service organization, capabilities, and business practices*
- **Competency #5:** *Knowledgeable of authorities and legal requirements affecting the Combatant Commands*
- **Competency #6:** *Knowledgeable of US Government Agencies (State Department, Justice, Department of Homeland Security, Department of the Treasury, etc.) and cognizant of their relationships with the Combatant Commands*
- **Competency #7:** *Able to write, read, and conduct research at an advanced level appropriate for work in an executive environment*
- **Competency #8:** *Uses well-developed strategic and higher order critical thinking skills for task assignments and problem solving*
- **Competency #9:** *Exhibits excellent time management skills*
- **Competency #10:** *Able to communicate effectively at executive levels and across a diverse workforce*
- **Competency #11:** *Able to build constructive work relationships*
- **Competency #12:** *Able to effectively manage and lead in a diverse work environment (civilians, contractors, Guard and Reserve, own and*



*sister Services personnel, interagency and multinational personnel)*

- **Competency #13:** *Able to maximize technology software and hardware capabilities*
- **Competency #14:** *Able to effectively participate in exercise preparation/planning*<sup>1</sup>
- **Competency # 15:** *Practices lifelong learning behaviors*

Although staff officers and leadership across the Combatant Commands agreed on the overall competency categories, they prioritized them differently. Staff officers listed the following as their top three training requirements:

- (1) Content knowledge needed for the job—specifically some type of Joint Staff 101, Combatant Command 101, Interagency 101, and Joint Staff Officer 101;
- (2) Significant training in writing improvement, reading and research skills,
- (3) Collaboration skills for working in a non-military work environment which is often more personality driven.

Senior leaders identified the top four priorities for staff officer competency as:

- (1) Interpersonal communication skills for building collaborative partnerships across a diverse workforce;
- (2) The ability to think and write strategically for presentation to an executive audience;
- (3) Understanding the role of a staff officer and executing at a high level of performance.
- (4) Completing tasks in a joint mindset, rather than a Service-specific one.

The greatest difference in staff officer and leader assessment is that staff officers feel the most critical thing they need is content knowledge; although they know quality of product is important, the volume of the workload and the pace of activities is such that staff officers choose to select quantity of tasks managed and completed over quality of each task. Senior leaders, however, want to see a higher level of proficiency, efficiency, and quality of product in staff officer work—quality of the analysis, thoroughness of the background work, and strategic thought applied to solutions offered.

It is not that the Services do not emphasize some of the core skills in their training and education programs, but rather that joint staff officers need a higher level of proficiency in most areas (e.g., writing strategically), some new

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<sup>1</sup> **\*\*Note:** (If assigned to a directorate responsible for exercises and planning, advanced and/or content specific knowledge will be needed)

competencies (e.g., a different type of interpersonal skill set), and some entirely new knowledge (Title authorities, budgeting) to work at peak performance in a four-star joint command environment

## Observations

After analyzing the data, it is clear that targeted training and education for becoming a successful staff officer appears to be virtually non-existent—or fragmented at best—prior to arriving at a Combatant Command headquarters. The Joint Professional Military Education Phase I and II programs are the primary sources for joint education for officers, but seats are limited and programs run from ten weeks to one year, so are not viable for addressing the shortfalls on an immediate basis; additionally, JPME is not designed for teaching joint *staff* officer skill sets, but rather for providing joint knowledge for the qualification requirements of joint officers. Although JPME is a component of a career development plan and addresses some elements of joint education needed in a joint staff officer job, no cohesive, structured *individual training* program exists.

The senior leaders in the Combatant Commands do not feel staff officers are managing the volume, complexity, and broad content areas of the work as well as they could. Staff officers feel overburdened with the volume, the broad subject matter areas they are expected to navigate, and the increasing numbers of tools, technologies, and business processes they are required to use; once on the job it is difficult to take the time to go to training. For the short term, the primary window of opportunity for providing some training and education is during the PCS (permanent change of station) process and at the very beginning of the combatant command tour.

Staff officers and leadership, like their peers in the other commands, are concerned about the Joint Professional Military Education (JPME) process. Participants did not differentiate education from training when they discussed *what* needed to be learned, but almost all were of the opinion that JPME should be the critical venue for providing staff officers with the appropriate joint knowledge and with a solid foundation in strategic thinking and writing skills. Almost all participants believe staff officers should attend JPME before arriving at a Combatant Command, instead of after. Currently, according to the survey participants, officers feel the system is broken because it is the exception instead of the rule that a staff officer gets to attend JPME prior to a Combatant Command assignment.

Staff officers' priority request is for the joint staff to help drive standardization of joint tools, processes, and business practices used in managing tasks. Study participants feel standardization will help improve the workflow within commands and across the joint world. Where feasible, the Joint Staff can establish standard forms and formats so that uniformity of products—particularly joint staffing packages—will reduce redundant work and establish a standard model to be

taught in service and joint programs. The various command tasking management systems received poor marks for usability, and were seen more often as a hindrance to coordination, rather than an asset. *Many suggested that all combatant commands should adopt the same task management system used by the Joint Staff in the Pentagon to facilitate the processing of staffing packages.*

Guard and Reserve personnel need staff officer training as well, but are limited in the opportunities to attend service and joint programs. Whatever solutions are developed for active duty staff officer training will need to be made available to Guard and Reserve personnel. Also, certain branches and organizations such as the Judge Advocate General, the Chaplain Corps, and Medical groups serve as strategic partners in a Combatant Command, and need access to training that will prepare their personnel to be joint knowledgeable and to contribute to the strategic mission of their respective commands.

Not all work performance issues can be solved by training. It is important to identify other organizational actions, which applied in conjunction with the appropriate training, can improve individual competency and proficiency. Using Hale's Zone of Competence model as the referent, misalignment of the three key areas— organization, job specifics, and individual capabilities—is notable. From the organizational perspective, continuous restructuring of staff capabilities to meet new and changing missions is on-going; organizational roles, relationships, and responsibilities are not well defined or communicated, rotation of personnel is erratic, and the core processes are not standardized. The individual commands can make improvements organizationally by finding ways to improve staff officer performance through better tasking procedures, providing more job aids and targeted command-specific training, by better defining and communicating roles and responsibilities across the directorates, and in finding ways to improve coordination and communication hurdles.

In the area of job stability, staff officer work is by nature chaotic because of global events, mission changes, and new technologies, so it is difficult to construct a job description that will be accurate for very long. *When job content is dynamic, as is that of the joint staff officer positions, it is critical to identify core performance tasks and base skills needed to complete tasks; the focus needs to be on developing high proficiency in core capabilities for managing the content and producing required outputs.* For example, the majority of daily tasks require software proficiency skills, executive-level writing and presentation skills, and interpersonal communication skills. By focusing on improving these competencies, personnel should develop better proficiency at managing the process and the context more effectively and efficiently, regardless of the content. Moving from tactical and operational assignments to, as one staff officer called it, "a bionic admin role," is a shocking change for first time staff officers. It is clear from the surveys across all Combatant Commands that most staff officers have little understanding of what a staff officer's job at a Combatant Command really entails; they come unprepared for the drastic change from a tactical field assignment. Those very few who have had former staff positions at the Joint

Staff or Service chief level are the only ones who seem to have an understanding of the job requirements.

In the category of individual capability, joint staff officers have moved from service specialties, where they have expertise, to a job where almost everything has to be learned, usually all at the same time, learning by doing, and with little guidance or leadership. Hale provides the perfect description of a typical staff officer: "When the job is dynamic and requires new knowledge and skills, individuals may be unqualified for new requirements, or may feel inadequate to perform new tasks....and the less knowledge of content, unfamiliarity with core systems, unfamiliarity with core processes and requirements, the longer and steeper the learning curve." *Based on the feedback from the study responses, targeted training and education for becoming a successful Combatant Command staff officer needs to be developed to teach in-bound individuals the competencies needed to perform tasks at the expected levels.*

Until organizational improvements can be made, job specific processes can be refined, and individual training and education can be provided in short-, mid-, and long-term programs, joint staff officers will continue to work outside their zone of competency.

## **The Way Ahead**

The ultimate goal is to prepare joint officers who will report to assignments ready and able to perform work tasks with high levels of proficiency. The recommendations from joint staff officers and leadership made in this study provide ideas and ways to implement successful performance improvement actions within the individual command organizations, as well as provide a direction for all stake holders to begin addressing the larger joint training deficit.

Each Combatant Command has been provided detailed, itemized reports of their respective staff officer and leadership input from Phases One and Two of the study. With the findings and the recommendations from staff officers the commands have the immediate opportunity to make internal improvements which can improve the proficiency of their command staffs. Data from the reports should also be used to aid in developing targeted internal training.

The Joint Staff J-7 JETD and JEDD, working in conjunction, should lead the way in taking the contributions and recommendations of this report to more specifically define the Joint Learning Continuum and develop an actionable plan for implementation in support of the Chairman's Vision.

Phase Three of the Joint Staff Officer Project, which is action- and solution-oriented should include, at a minimum, the following concurrent actions:

- Document and formally define the Joint Learning Continuum using relevant OSD Directives and Joint Staff Instructions.
- With JS J-7 as the lead and working with JFCOM JKDDC, develop a five-year action plan, with implementation steps for actionable items for achieving the Joint Learning Continuum,
- Immediately incorporate the findings of this study into the Joint Learning Continuum and the Joint Officer Development Program as part of the individual training component, aligned with the Chairman's Vision for Joint Officer Development, and the OSD Training Transformation initiatives, and other initiatives and instructions as appropriate;
- With JS J-7 JETD as the lead, develop a plan of action to provide a common joint tasking management tool, and standardized formats and procedures for managing joint staffing packages for use across and among the Joint Staff and the Combatant Commands;
- Create a task force of stakeholder representatives (Joint and Service) to review and refine the fifteen competencies identified in the study and begin to explore mid- to long-term solutions for individual training and education that will teach these competencies to potential joint staff personnel. The initial outcome should be a report with viable, actionable solutions with recommendations and timelines as appropriate; the long-term outcome should be a formal plan and curriculum (including both training and education approaches).
- JS J-7 JETD provided support to the Combatant Commands in developing their own robust organic training capabilities to develop Command-specific joint staff officer training.
- Conduct an analysis of the fifteen competencies against the Combatant Commands Joint Mission Essential Task Lists.

As parallel short-term efforts which could provide some immediate support:

- JS J7 JETD should lead the inventory and assessment of current, existing Combatant Command- sponsored training (courses, modules, briefings, reports, etc.) which are viable as primary sources for teaching/ training any of the fifteen core competencies and which can be shared immediately across the commands;
- Working together JS-J7 JEDD and JS J7 JETD should create an inventory of existing courses or modules within the existing JPME programs which could possibly address any of the competencies and which are shareable across the commands;
- JS J7 JETD, working with the JFCOM JKDDC team, conduct a cross check and assessment of existing JKDDC courseware which could address any of the competency components;

- JFCOM JKDDC lead the development of a Joint Staff Officer 101 course to teach the core skills and knowledge needed as identified by senior leaders and staff officers to work in a combatant command.

The current individual training deficit for Combatant Command staff officers will continue to grow as the need for more joint staff officers rises, the pool for available staff officers decreases, the ratio of O-4s and below remains high, and the reliance of Guard and Reserve personnel serving in the staff positions remains heavy. It is imperative to take action to offset the skill deficits of inexperienced and untrained personnel. To improve staff officer performance, the joint competency learning curve must be significantly reduced through on-demand targeted training and education at various points in the Service/Joint duty and through a variety of methods—classroom, self-study, experiential lessons, and technology delivery systems such as on-line programs and simulations. One joint staff officer went right to the heart of the matter and said,

“...while I do understand the intent of this survey and am not trying to be difficult...having previously served in another COCOM, I have seen the results of the past research and noted no resulting improvement. Without any improvement, required events such as these are obstacles to my job.”

The Combatant Commands have made considerable investment to support Phases One and Two of this project, and thus attest to the importance of the subject: survey responses resulted in over 5,000 pages of data; with approximately 4,000 hours of Combatant Command manpower dedicated to participating in the site discussions, responding to the survey, and reviewing final reports. Approximately 2,000 staff officers and senior leaders have provided detailed information on the performance needed and the lack of training available. The stakeholders—OSD, the Joint Staff, the Combatant Commands, JFCOM JKDDC, and the Services—have the challenge of taking the contributions made to this study and turning them into timely, actionable, helpful solutions which will result in significant improved performance of joint staff officers.

# Section 1: Introduction

## 1.1. Background

The Joint Staff J-7 Joint Exercise and Training Division (JETD) initiated the Joint Staff Officer Study based on requests from senior officers to assist in developing individual training for staff officers assigned to the Combatant Commands. Consistently, leaders remarked that most staff officers are arriving at Combatant Command Headquarters (HQ) without the knowledge, skills and abilities needed to perform their tasks in a strategically focused work environment. The JETD Director initiated a study across the Combatant Commands focused on identifying individual joint staff officer training requirements. Phase One of the study, begun in April 2006, was conducted via on-site group discussions with approximately 300 representative staff officers and senior leaders in the nine Combatant Commands. In Phase Two, an on-line survey completed in December 2007 by 1550 staff officers and senior leaders provided more in-depth data concerning job requirements of joint staff officers, as well as an assessment from senior leaders of competencies required for joint staff officers.

The overall objective of the Joint Staff Officer (JSO) Study is to identify basic joint staff officer performance requirements in the following areas:

- (1) General tasks, products, and outputs required of joint staff officers;
- (2) Individual joint staff officer knowledge, skills, abilities, attitudes, and attributes needed for shortening learning curves and improving work performance;
- (3) Tools, technology systems, and process systems required in joint staff officer tasks;
- (4) Organizational factors at the Department of Defense, Joint Staff, and Service level, and Combatant Command/ Directorate specific level which affect individual joint staff officer job performance;
- (5) Identification of the characteristics of the ideal joint staff officer, as defined by Combatant Command senior leaders;
- (6) Prior relevant experience, education, or training.

This report provides the combined findings of Phase One and Phase Two data from across the Combatant Commands. As participants were ensured non-attribution, comments presented in this report are without acknowledgment of individual names. Comments collected during the discussion sessions and from the surveys reflect the personal views, opinions, and experiences of those who participated.

A needs analysis by nature seeks critical and sometimes negative information as it is designed to primarily find the weaknesses in an organization—to find root causes for training issues, as well as secondary and tertiary issues affecting work performance. It is also important to determine, if possible, what is not causing the problems, so that solutions do not inadvertently create more problems or

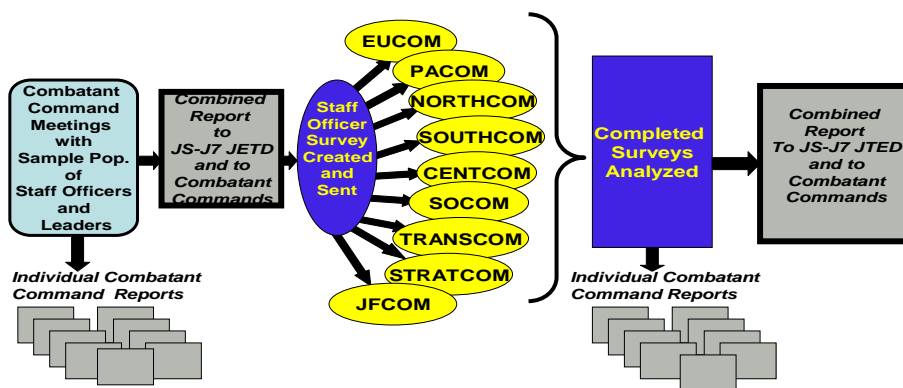
attempt to “fix” parts of the organization which are not broken. The tendency is normally toward negative responses in discussion groups and survey feedback because the focus for performance improvement is based on what is ***not*** working well and why.

Consistently, throughout the entire Joint Staff Officer Study, participants have been extremely personable, eager to participate in getting much needed training in place—(because they feel strongly that what is needed does not completely exist in the current programs)—and adamant in their belief that staff officer work can be improved if the stakeholders will work together to find and implement solutions based in training and education programs as well as in organizational improvement. The officers and senior leaders who participated in this study—a very broad range of personnel and personalities, and a large percentage of the Combatant Command staffs—have been overwhelmingly positive in seeking solutions for more and improved individual training for joint staff officers. They have been selfless, candid, realistic, and focused on what can be done for those who follow, as they fully understand that due to the time it takes within the system to create new training and education initiatives, the solutions will probably not be available to aid them in their current assignments.

## 1.2. Scope of the Study

The Joint Staff Officer (JSO) Study includes responses from across nine Combatant Commands, as USAFRICOM was not yet formalized during the timeframe for this initiative. Representative staff officers from each grade level within all directorates participated in roundtable discussions during the site visits. In total, 1,858 personnel participated in the study: 293 in the on-site meetings, 1,565 in the surveys—219 senior leaders (Division Chiefs and above) and 1,639 joint staff officers in grades O-1 through O-5.

The diagram below (Figure 1) delineates the process for the full scale project:



**Figure 1: Learning Continuum Staff Officer Task Analysis Process**

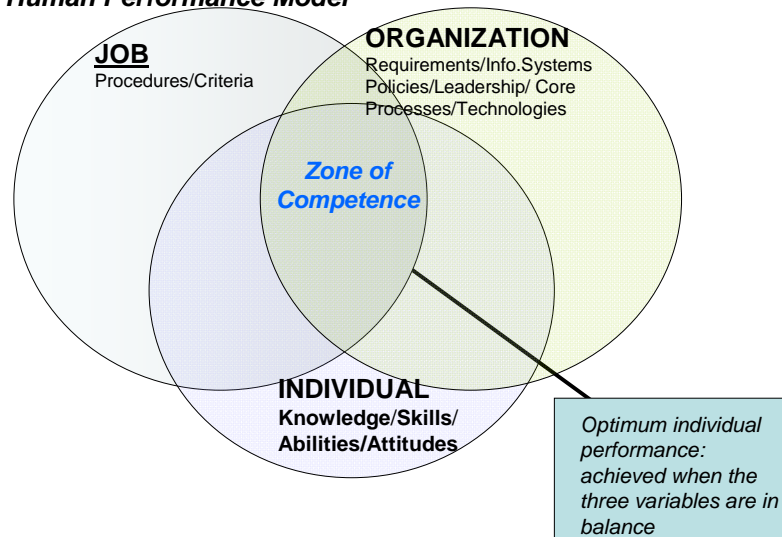


Each Combatant Command was provided an individual site report at the end of both Phase One and Phase Two studies for their review and comments concerning the data collected from their staff officers and senior leaders and for their internal use for developing or improving command-specific training.

### 1.3. Methodology

The purpose of this study was to identify ways in which joint staff officer work performance can be improved, to include identifying other factors such as non-training organizational and cultural issues which may affect job performance. For this study, Hale's Zone of Competence, a human performance model (Figure 2), provided the foundation for the development of discussion questions, the survey questions, and the analysis of the data. Hale's model requires a review of job procedures and criteria, organizational elements, and individual knowledge and skill set requirements. The better the three elements are aligned, the better the performance of both the individuals and the organization. All problem areas identified may not be root causes for below par performance; some may be solved with simple internal process changes, and some may be so complex or embedded in corporate culture that training alone will not solve performance issues. Optimal individual performance—the Zone of Competence—is achieved when job criteria and procedures are well defined, when foundational and targeted training and education are provided to support job requirements, and when organizational tools, workflow processes, leadership, and policies are aligned.

**Hale's Human Performance Model**



<b><u>The Organization</u></b>	<b><u>On the Job</u></b>	<b><u>Individuals</u></b>
<p><i>Shapes performance through</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• culture and values</li> <li>• leadership and guidance</li> <li>• information systems</li> <li>• core processes</li> <li>• technologies</li> <li>• economic strength</li> <li>• reputation</li> <li>• how well-defined are organizational roles, responsibilities, relationships</li> <li>• stability of rotation of personnel</li> </ul>	<p><i>Individual performance is affected by:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• how well-designed are rules, procedures, processes associated with jobs/tasks</li> <li>• how efficient &amp; appropriate is technology used in job</li> <li>• how similar &amp; reasonable are customer expectations &amp; needs</li> <li>• how mature &amp; functional are business relationships</li> <li>• how clear, accurate, and timely is work information</li> </ul>	<p><i>Because individuals bring different skills/knowledge/emotional/physical capacities/ motives to the job:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• when people's capacities and capabilities change, the balance at work is disrupted</li> <li>• when the job is dynamic and requires new knowledge and skills, individuals may be unqualified for new requirements, or may feel inadequate to perform new tasks</li> <li>• the less knowledge of content, unfamiliarity with core systems, unfamiliarity with core processes and requirements, the longer and steeper the learning curve</li> </ul>

**Figure 2: Hale's Zone of Competence Human Performance Model<sup>2</sup>.**

Data collection methods used included individual and small group discussions, observation of workers at their jobs (when feasible), and survey responses which provided anecdotal and statistical information related to the areas listed in Figure 2 above.

The data collection process has been thorough, interactive, and cooperative. Dr. Linda Fenty, working closely with the combatant commands and with JS J-7 JETD, conducted the site discussions and individual meetings, designed the survey and analyzed the data, which reduced the margin of error associated with multiple interviewers/data collectors. Additionally, JS J-7 JETD personnel participated in designing the project and data collection plan, participated in on site discussions and individual meetings, reviewed the cumulative Phase One Report, reviewed and tested the Phase Two survey before release, and led discussion sessions at two Joint Worldwide Training and Scheduling Conferences for interim feedback. The individual Combatant Commands were provided opportunities to review and provide feedback for their individual site reports (for both Phase One and Phase Two), as well as participating in reviewing the survey before its release. The Joint Forces Staff College programmed the survey and hosted it on their web site and maintained the database throughout Phase Two of the study.

Data from the discussion groups was used to develop a baseline and survey responses were used to provide comparative/contrasting responses. The numerical data presented in this report is based primarily on the survey

<sup>2</sup> Hale, Judith. The Performance Consultant's Fieldbook. Jossey-Bass, Pfeiffer. 1998. pp.97-98

feedback; the anecdotal data is from both the discussion groups, one-on-one meetings, and the survey anecdotal responses which were quite extensive. Any differences from the discussion participants (Phase One) and the survey responses (Phase Two) are noted in the text. For the purposes of this report the anecdotal information is being provided in a combined and consolidated manner, with focus on those areas common across all Combatant Commands. Since each command was provided detailed reporting on their site-specific data, little itemized listing will be included in this combined edition; the data is still being maintained by the Joint Forces Staff College as needed for future use.

## 1.4. Participant Data

Figures 3 and 4 illustrate the number of personnel, by Combatant Command, who participated in Phases One and Two of this study.

Grade	CENT-COM	EUCOM	JFCOM	NORAD/NORTH-COM	PACOM	SOCOM	SOUTH-COM	STRAT-COM	TRANS-COM	Totals
O-1s through O-5s	17	35	25	20	24	28	25	18	19	211
Senior Leaders (O-6 and above)	7	12	7	14	11	11	7	4	9	82
<b>Totals</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>293</b>

*Figure 3: Phase One Site Visits: Staff officers and senior leader meetings—April -September 2006*

Grade	CENT-COM	EUCOM	JFCOM	NORAD/NORTH-COM	PACOM	SOCOM	SOUTH-COM	STRAT-COM	TRANS-COM	Others	TOTALS
O-10		1									1
O-9				1				1			2
O-8		2			1	1	1	1	1		7
O-7				1			2	3	1		7
O-6	2	14	3	25	40	10	12	22	52	2	182
O-5	3	37	27	120	108	18	75	87	88	9	572
O-4	1	36	37	82	108	32	72	117	64	9	558
O-3		2	7	39	45	3	29	33	17	2	177
O-2					5		1	5	1		12
O-1					1		1	1	1		4
SES									2		2
Other***		1	4	9	5	3	9	3	3	4	41
<b>Totals</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>93*</b>	<b>78*</b>	<b>277*</b>	<b>313*</b>	<b>67*</b>	<b>202*</b>	<b>273*</b>	<b>230*</b>	<b>26**</b>	<b>1,565</b>

*Figure 4. Phase Two Survey Responses—November-December 2007: Staff officers and senior leaders by grade*

(\*Total includes some personnel who originally listed their Combatant Command as "Other" and were not included in the individual site reports; additional personnel included: EUCOM, 5 personnel; JFCOM, 1 person; N/NC, 10 personnel; PACOM, 7 personnel; SOCOM, 1 person; SOUTHCOM, 1 person; STRATCOM, 1 person; TRANSCOM, 1 person.)

\*\*"Others" under the heading column are those personnel who did not identify their Combatant Command or said they reported to a different organization such as DIA or DTRA.

\*\*\*"Others" in the Grade column include those who did not give a rank, Warrant Officers, and interagency personnel.)

## 1.5. Relevant Terms and Definitions

The following terms are used throughout this report; the definitions are provided as a basis for common reference and to aid in better understanding elements of the composite report:

- **Competency:** A competency is the ability to adequately perform tasks associated with a specific job or function; it is the combination of knowledge, skills, abilities, attributes, and attitudes needed to successfully perform tasks at a specified level of proficiency. Individuals develop competencies through training, experience, education, natural abilities, personal attributes (e.g., work ethic), and motivations.
- **Knowledge:** A body of information relevant to job performance; what an individual needs to know to be able to perform a job (e.g., knowledge of protocols, policies, procedures, missions).
- **Skill:** Demonstration of a particular capability such as a technical or mechanical skill (e.g., use of a particular software package, operating a piece of equipment, use of a tool) or a verbal skill (e.g., facilitating a meeting, making a presentation).
- **Ability:** A talent, or natural predisposition such as visual or spatial acuity, or conceptual thinking (e.g., analytical skills, manual dexterity, height or weight).
- **Attribute (traits, characteristics, attitudes):** A personality characteristic or behavioral tendency an individual brings to a job (e.g., ambition, work ethic, analytical mindset). Although some attributes may be taught, learned, or altered, they occur naturally in some people more than others (e.g., introspective, extrovert).
- **Performance:** Performance is the accomplishment of a task against an identified standard of completeness and accuracy. An individual may have developed the required competency (knowledge, skills, abilities, attributes) to perform a task, but may not have the attitude (e.g., ambition, work ethic) to do so at the required level of performance (e.g., with no errors, at a

certain rate of speed, consistently in a set number of repetitions). While competencies provide ability, attitudes are important considerations in job performance because they are what give people the motivations to perform.

- **Behavior:** The observable demonstration of a competency, skill, ability, or attitude; a set of actions which can be observed, taught, learned and measured.
- **Behavioral Levels:** Each level defines how much of a particular competency an individual must have to be successful in his or her work (e.g., the degree of mastery of a skill or knowledge area, or the type of performance). Behaviors are usually delineated in increasingly complex levels of descriptions, sometimes including sequential and/or cumulative skill sets. Levels also relate to authority, influence, or span of control ranging from individual, to unit, to system-wide, to global reach.

Basic Knowledge (Entry/Beginner) Level: demonstrates a rudimentary/elementary understanding of the concepts/tasks of a competency; is able to perform tasks with assistance, guidance, or close supervision of more experienced colleagues and leaders.

Working Knowledge (Intermediate) Level: demonstrates a thorough understanding of the concepts/tasks of a competency, and is able to perform with minimal assistance, guidance, direction, or supervision.

Advanced Knowledge (Senior/Expert) Level: is very accomplished and highly skilled; is recognized as an accomplished, experienced information source in a particular competency and is able to coach, guide, lead, or teach others; may be considered/recognized as a subject matter expert by authorities in a particular field.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Developed by Dr. Linda Fenty, Global Insights, Inc., 2006. Joint Staff Officer Study: Phase One Combined Report, August 2007.

## Section 2: Combatant Command Staff Officer Data

This section of the report provides a profile of the staff officers working within the Combatant Commands, based on billet data and responses collected in this study. One of the first steps in the performance analysis is to determine the relevant experience and skill levels of those working within a specific job category, in this case joint staff officers. This is particularly important to verify what senior leaders report, that joint staff officers are reporting to the commands without the right skills at the right levels of proficiency to get tasks completed at a level expected in a 4-star strategic combatant command.

### 2.1. Authorized, Approved Staff Officer Billet Distribution by Grade

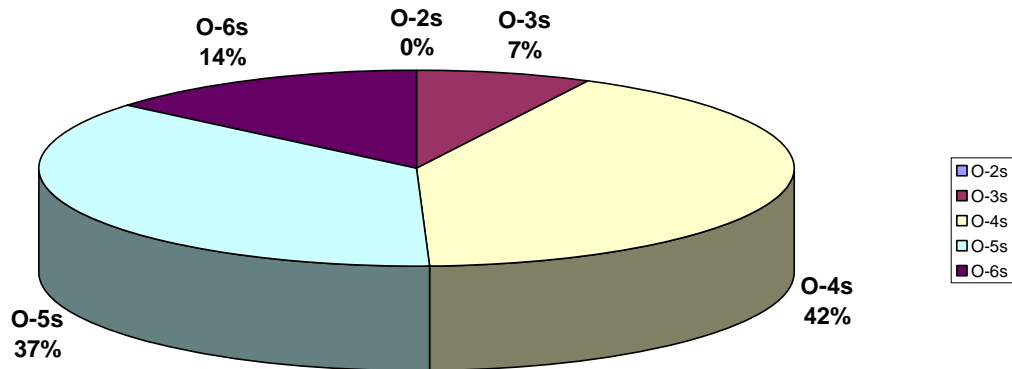
One of the first areas for review is the distribution by grade across the Combatant Commands; grade level is important in helping to identify the experiential background as well as the career training and education levels of the HQ staffs. The numbers in Figure 5 were provided by either the individual Combatant Commands or pulled from e-JMAPS data; the tables were reviewed and approved by the individual command points of contact for this project. The numbers below are meant to provide a close approximation of authorized and approved staff officer billets within each of the Combatant Commands, as the numbers fluctuate frequently for a variety of organizational reasons.

Grades	CENT-COM	EU-COM	JF-COM	NORTH-COM	PA-COM	SO-COM	SOUTH-COM	STRAT-COM	TRANS-COM	Totals
O-2	2		1					1		4
O-3	19	16	32	55	14	19	83	39	12	289
O-4	192	139	173	228	134	250	225	186	102	1,629
O-5	133	156	220	175	106	287	147	122	86	1,432
O-6	50	48	59	88	55	100	52	52	38	542
	396	359	485	546	309	656	507	400	238	3,896

**Figure 5: Combatant Command Headquarters Staff Officer Distribution by Grade as of March 2008**

Of the 3,896 approved, authorized billets, **49.3%** are in grades O-4 and below—the least career-experienced personnel on the staff, least likely to have served in a previous joint assignment or staff officer assignment, and with the least amount of time in military training and education programs. It is important to note that because of assignment flexibility personnel can be assigned to a billet one grade

lower or higher than their own rank, so the reality is that many of the O-4 and O-5 slots may be filled with personnel in grades O-3 and O-4 respectively; and the O-4 and O-3 slots may be filled with O-2s and O-1s. As a case in point, no O-1s and only four O-2s are listed in the billet table above; however four O-1s and twelve O-2s responded to the on-line survey, which leads to the probability that the percentage of O-4s and below serving in a joint staff officer position on any given day is between the 50 to 55% range, with the percentage at 60% or higher in a few of the commands. Figure 6 provides a pictorial breakdown of distribution by grade of the combined Combatant Command authorized joint staff officer billets.



**Figure 6: Percentage Breakdown by Grade of Combatant Command Joint Staff Officers (Note: the number of O-2 authorized billets is listed as four which is less than one percent so appears on the chart above as zero.)**

Of concern to senior leaders and to staff officers is that O-3s and below do not currently receive any joint credit for serving in a position at a Combatant Command. JS J-7 Joint Education and Doctrine Division (JEDD) is participating in the new Joint Officer Qualification System Strategic Plan, which is co-sponsored by JCSJ-1 and OSDP&R (Office of the Secretary of Defense Personnel and Readiness; one of the objectives of the plan is to identify possible alternative methods for completion of Joint Officer Management (JOM) qualification and to allow personnel serving in joint billets to apply for joint credit. Grades O-3 and below are not mentioned specifically in the plan, so it will be

necessary to clarify who would be eligible to request credit for time served in a Combatant Command.<sup>4</sup>

## 2.2. Survey Respondents Distribution by Grade, Service and Joint Directorate

The combined response rate to the two phases of the Joint Staff Officer Study was 43% of the base population of 3,896, a very good percentage. Additionally, the response rates by grade, service, and Joint Directorate are proportionately aligned with the percentages of grades of the total population, thus providing an excellent representation of Combatant Command staff officers. Of note, some of the individual command rates of survey response are significantly higher than the combined response rate; a few of the commands had less than 75 respondents on the staff officer survey, and one had only four. Figure 7 provides a breakdown by Service, component, grade, and Directorate for total staff officer survey respondents; the information for respondents to the Senior Leader Survey is not included in this table, but is provided in Section 6.

Service	Component	#	%	Grade	#	%	Directorate	#	%
Air Force	Active	438	30.7%	O-1	4	0.3%	CC Staff	65	4.6%
Air Force	N/A	52	3.6%	O-2	12	0.8%	COS Office	21	1.5%
Air Force	National Guard	5	0.4%	O-3	176	12.3%	J-1	39	2.7%
Air Force	Reserve	45	3.2%	O-4	557	39.0%	J-2	194	13.6%
Army	Active	267	18.7%	O-5	548	38.4%	J-3	359	25.1%
Army	N/A	16	1.1%	O-6	104	7.3%	J-4	79	5.5%
Army	National Guard	19	1.2%				J-5	165	11.6%
Army	Reserve	64	4.5%				J-6	122	8.5%
Coast Guard	Active	4	0.3%				J-7	70	4.9%
Coast Guard	N/A	2	0.1%				J-8	45	3.2%
Marine Corps	Active	71	5.0%				J-9	33	2.3%
Marine Corps	N/A	10	0.7%				Joint Task Force	7	0.5%
Marine Corps	Reserve	10	0.7%				SJFHQ	43	3.0%
Navy	Active	338	23.7%						
Navy	N/A	38	2.7%						
Navy	Reserve	44	3.1%						
Other	No Answer	5	0.4%	Other	27	1.9%	Other	186	13.0%
<b>Total</b>		<b>1428</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>1428</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>1428</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Figure 7: Phase Two: Staff Officer Survey Respondents by Service, Grade, and Directorate<sup>5</sup> (Notes: N/A indicates individuals did not designate a Component; other in the Grade Section indicates Warrant Officers, Government civilians, and those who did not designate a grade.)**

<sup>4</sup> Joint Qualification System Implementation Plan, [www.defenselink.mil/transformation/documents/JOMJQSImplementationPlan.doc](http://www.defenselink.mil/transformation/documents/JOMJQSImplementationPlan.doc)

<sup>5</sup> N/A in the Component column indicates individuals did not designate whether they are active, Gurad, or Reservist.



## Section 3: The Job and the Individual

### 3.1. Ramp-Up Time: “Learning Curve Is Too Long”

One of the primary concerns raised by senior leaders to JS J7 JETD was that the learning curve, or ramp-up time, for incoming staff officers is too steep and too long. Additionally, staff officers themselves acknowledged frustration with the steep learning curves when checking into a Combatant Command. Many staff officers and leaders said a two or three year tour at a Combatant Command was too short for a staff officer to be effective. Even though they understand there will always be a learning curve in any assignment, they feel the learning curve at the Combatant Command level is disproportionately long.

Even with some joint experience the learning curve for most staff officers, according to survey respondents, is at a minimum seven to twelve months due to the joint knowledge, technical proficiencies, staffing processes, and command-specific knowledge a staff officer must learn, and due to the bureaucracy and internal processes of the combatant command in which they are serving. Figure 8 below identifies the breakdown of survey responses with regard to length of ramp up time across the Combatant Commands; there was no significant difference among individual commands. **63%** of the responding officers reported that it takes seven months or longer to get to a point where they feel they can generally manage the tasks of the job, regardless of the command where they served; on a 24 to 36 month assignment this is a significant amount of time to learn the basics. All of the six Coast Guard respondents reported a learning curve of seven or more months, but there were no significant differences among the other Services. Anecdotal responses indicated that although most say they can manage tasks at the 9 to 12 month range, they comment that they still do not necessarily feel competent or comfortable; as one respondent described, however, they can at least “keep their heads above the water.”

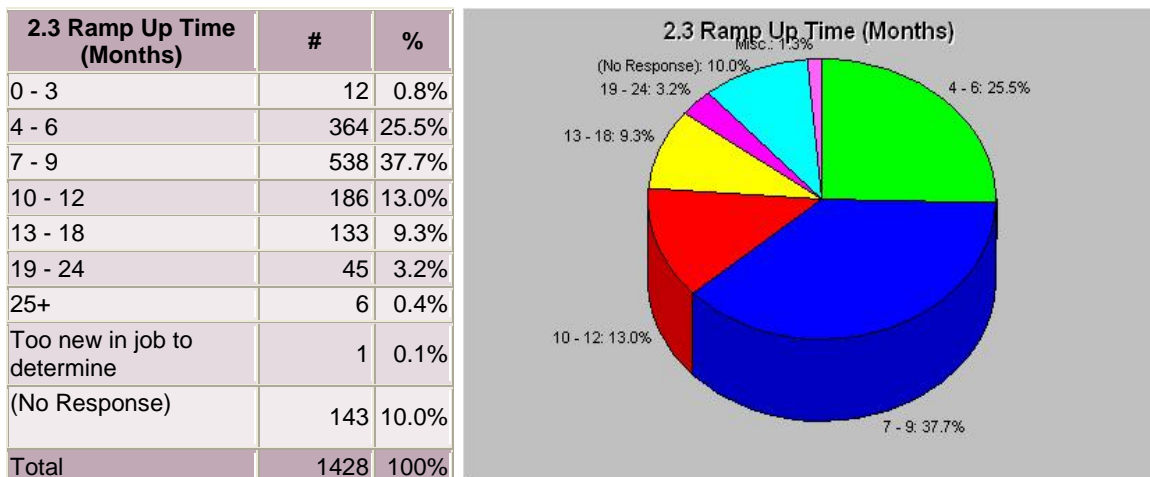


Figure 8: Ramp-Up Time for Peak Performance

The breakdown for a ramp up time of seven months or longer by grade level is as follows:

- O-6s....60% (58 of 97 respondents)
- O-5s....74% (374 of 507 respondents)
- O-4s....72% (350 of 483 respondents)
- O-3s....65% (105 of 161 respondents)
- O-2s....50% (4 of 8 respondents)
- O-1s.... 33% (1 of 3 respondents)

Grades O-3 through O-6 all show high percentages—60% and above—of officers with seven months or longer ramp up time. The O-6s, who have the most military experience and professional military education, also indicated they have significant learning curves, to include serving and often managing/supervising, for the first time in a joint environment. At all grades, respondents reported that lack of targeted training, lack of prior joint and staff experiences, lack of joint knowledge, and joint staffing processes and systems all contributed to lengthening the learning curve. In addition staff officers and senior leaders identified a number of organizational factors at the Joint Staff and Service-specific level and at the combatant command/directorate specific level, which affect their ability to complete tasks in more efficient and effective ways. These issues are discussed in more detail later in this report.

Ironically the O-2s and O-1s percentages indicated a shorter ramp-up time, which may be because they are so few in number in the survey to accurately portray their real learning curves. But some reported in their anecdotal data they were not being given challenging work. One O-2 evaluated why he had such a short learning curve (1-3 months)--“This is an indictment of the job I'm doing, not praise of the training program or self-congratulations.” Although there are not many O-2s and O-1s in the combatant commands, it appears from the feedback, they may be underutilized.

### **3.2. Joint Critical Billets and Time in Assignment**

Each Combatant Command has a certain number of authorized approved billets which are designated as joint critical billets, and a requirement for filling the billet is completion of JPME II (Joint Professional Military Education, Phase II). Of the 1428 joint staff officers who responded to the survey 314 report they are serving in joint critical billets; 565 officers are not serving in joint critical billets, 529 do not know if they are in a joint critical billet or not, and 20 did not answer the question. Only 302 officers have completed JPME II, 70 said they are currently scheduled to attend during their current tour, and 14 are scheduled to attend upon leaving the Combatant Command assignment; JPME is a volatile subject among staff officers and senior leaders and is discussed in more detail in Section 4.

In Phase One discussions across the commands, group participants reported that many of them had been reassigned to a different job either before arriving or soon after. Both staff officers and senior leaders cited job changes and rotations as an additional cause of turbulence which interfered with work performance; they also reported the average tour is 22 to 24 months in length. Survey participants were asked if they began work in the job for which they had been selected; 18% reported they did not. The primary reasons cited were reorganizations across the command, lack of proper clearances, and temporary movements to fill other slots until the job came open, changes in job responsibilities, along with a variety of other organizational issues. The longer it takes for a staff officer to get settled into a particular job assignment, the longer the learning curve. A number of officers also reported changing jobs several times within the first two years of the assignment, which can be an additional disruption to the organization and the individual. Division leaders reported that if staff officers showed really good capabilities they often get pulled up to the executive offices, leaving the divisions with a vacancy again. Additionally the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have added to the rotation turbulence, making the rotation problem more extensive.

Thirty-seven percent (37%) of respondents have been in their current billets nine months or less, approximately 9% for nine to twelve months, 28.5% for one to two years, 20.5% for two to three years, and 7% more than 36 months—for this study, a very good cross-section of experience and time in jobs within the command. What this indicates for the commands, however, coupled with approximately 50% of staff officers in grades O-4 and below, is that large portions of the HQ staff have minimal joint and staff experience for handling day to day tasks. This lack of experience, short rotations through the commands, churning of personnel once in the command, and lack of joint-specific training and education prior to arriving at the command all contribute to longer learning curves for staff officers.

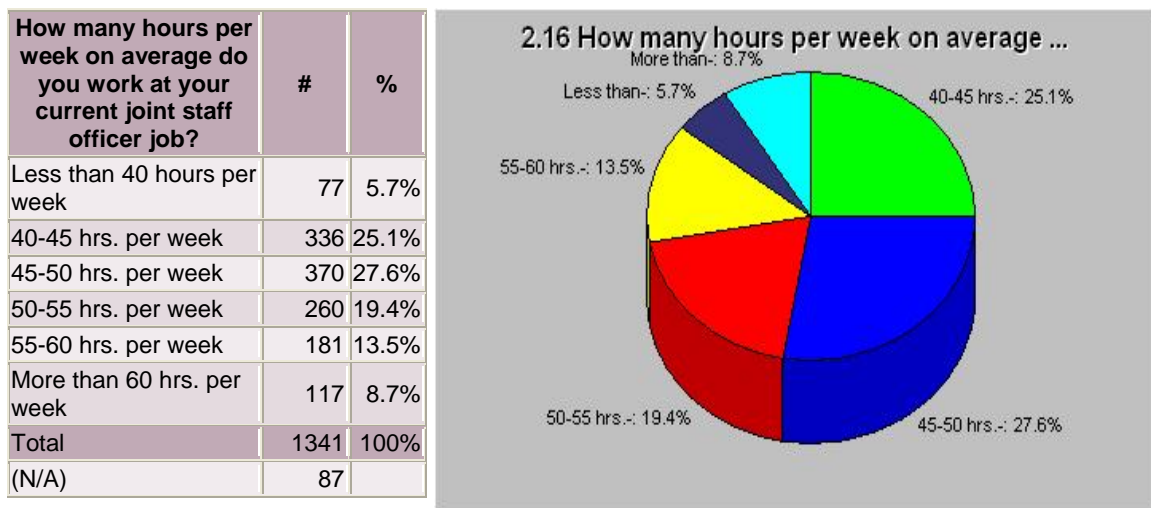
### **3.3. Job Descriptions**

Very few current, accurate job descriptions seem to exist for staff officer positions. During the site visits each command was asked to provide job descriptions, but of the nine commands, only one provided three job descriptions, all of which (according to the officers holding those jobs), were outdated, incomplete, or incorrect. One of the complaints from staff officers—particularly from those who had never served in staff assignments before and really had little understanding of what the job entailed until arrival—was the lack of good job descriptions for their positions. Those officers felt if they had more accurate work descriptions they would have been less surprised and would have probably done more personal preparation prior to arrival, or at least have had a mental framework for what the job entailed upon arrival. In reality, it is difficult writing a *content-specific* job description because the content is dynamic based on changing missions, world events, and op tempo. *Baseline descriptions*, however, can be written identifying the foundational competencies—including

skills, general knowledge, and minimal levels of proficiency—for staff officer positions. Combatant Command unique requirements (such as regional-knowledge, specific technical requirements, or content-specific expertise) should be provided by the receiving command. Baseline descriptions focus on the types of tasks required so that training approaches can teach the skills needed to complete the tasks, allowing the officer to focus on learning content specific information and organizational processes.

### 3.4. Average Weekly Hours Worked

Volume of work and extra time on the job were reported by site visit discussion participants as two of the more stressful aspects of the job. In a combined roll-up of the data over 40% of staff officers indicated they work more than 50 hours per week as shown in Figure 9.



**Figure 9: Staff Officers’ Average Hours Worked Per Week**

When reviewing by command, all commands reported that over 20% of survey respondents work between 45-50 hours per week. USPACOM and USSOCOM both have more than 25% of respondents who work 50 to 55 hours per week. USEUCOM has the highest percentage, at 22.9%, of personnel who work 55 to 60 hours per week, and USPACOM has the most personnel, at 15.7%, working more than 60 hours per week. Both USEUCOM and USPACOM have the highest percentages of personnel working over 45 hours per week, with USPACOM staff indicating the most hours per week. Figure 10 below gives the hours worked breakdown by command, with **green** highlight indicating the highest percentage in each level of hours worked, and **yellow** highlight marking the next highest levels.

	EUCOM		JFCOM		NORAD/ NORTH- COM		PACOM		SOCOM		SOUTH- COM		STRATCOM		TRANSCOM	
	#	% of total resp	#	% of total resp	#	% of total resp	#	% of total resp	#	% of total resp	#	% of total resp	#	% of total resp	#	% of total resp
45-50 hrs. per week	18	25.7	20	27.8	69	31.1	72	28.2	12	20.7	54	31.8	67	26.5	46	24.5
50-55 hrs. per week	14	20.0	10	13.9	31	14.0	64	25.1	15	25.9	36	21.2	45	17.8	35	18.6
55-60 hrs. per week	16	22.9	6	8.3	21	9.5	43	16.9	7	12.1	25	14.7	28	11.1	26	13.8
More than 60 hrs. per week	7	10.0	2	2.8	13	5.9	40	15.7	2	3.4	16	9.4	15	5.9	15	8.0

**Figure 10: Staff Officers' Average Hours Worked Per Week by Combatant Command**

When looking at work hours by grade the senior officers, grades O-5 and O-6, work more hours per week than the other grades. The totals break down by grade as follows:

- O-6:** 68 of 98 (**69%**) work more than 50 hours per week
- O-5:** 250 of 516 (**48%**) work more than 50 hours per week
- O-4:** 193 of 526 (**37%**) work more than 50 hours per week
- O-3:** 37 of 164 (**23%**) work more than 50 hours per week
- O-2:** 2 of 11 (**18%**) work more than 50 hours per week
- O-1:** 1 of 2 (**50%**) work more than 50 hours per week

Figure 11 gives a breakdown of hours worked by Joint Directorate. For the Combatant Commander's office, The Chief of Staff's office, and J-1, over 50% of the staff officers in each reported working 50 or more hours per week.

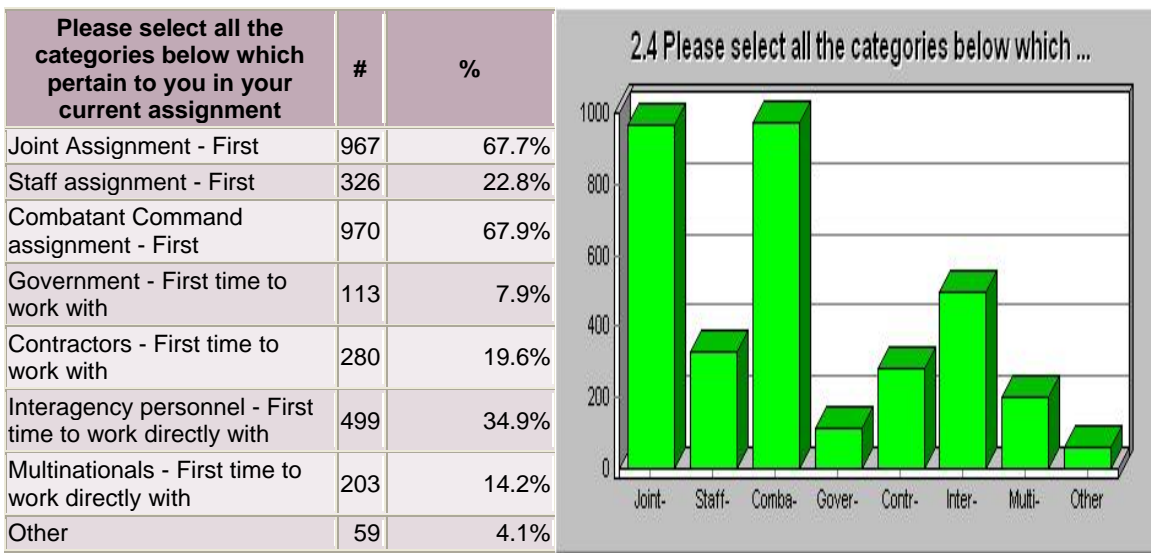
Directorate	J-1	J-2	J-3	J-4	J-5	J-6	J-7	J-8	J-9	CoS	CC Staff	Other (JTF, SJFHQ, etc.)
% of Personnel working more than 50 hrs. per week	53%	42%	45%	40%	39%	34%	40%	35%	45%	56%	63%	36%
# of Survey respondents	38	80	337	71	163	111	68	43	29	21	60	220

**Figure 11: More than 50 Hours Worked Per Week by Directorate**

### 3.5. Joint Experiential Background

During on-site visits the majority of participants, regardless of rank or Service, said they were serving in their first joint assignments and were working for the first time in a diverse work environment. The survey results find that almost 68% of the 1,428 staff officers responding to the survey (55% of O-6s, 59% of O-5s, 76% of O-4s, 78% of O-3s, 92% of O-2s, 100% of O-1s) said they are serving in their first joint assignment, and 970 personnel (68%) are also in their first Combatant Command assignment.

Also of significance, 23% are in their first staff assignment. Of those who have had former staff assignments, nearly all of them have been Service-specific staff jobs (a very few have had Joint Staff assignments), but they acknowledged that although they had some idea of what a staff job would be like, they had no idea what working in a 4-star joint combatant command with strategic focus would be like. As well, 35% of respondents across all the commands indicated this was the first time to work with interagency personnel. Figure 12 shows the number and percentage of personnel serving in “first” assignments.



**Figure 12: Joint Staff Officer Assignment “Firsts”**

Those who listed the “Other” category gave the following explanations: prior joint assignments—“done all prior to this;” first extended time to work with other Services; first time working for a civilian boss.

When looking by grade, almost 60% of O-5s and O-6s (the leaders and supervisors) indicate this is their first joint assignment. And as expected, in all other categories the grades O-4 and below rate the highest in inexperience. When asked if they felt their military operational background and experiential knowledge prepared them well for managing the military content of their current duties, survey respondents answered as follows in Figure 13. Although approximately 68% feel they had enough military experience to handle the

majority of their work content, one third (32%) indicate they had to learn the military content of the job in addition to any joint knowledge and technical knowledge unique to the job.

# and % of Respondents	<i>Did your military operational background prepare you for managing the military content of your current duties</i>
181 (12.7%)	<b>No: most all of it is new; I have had to learn the majority of the content of my current job</b>
272 (19.1%)	<b>Some; but not enough to completely handle the content without a lot of study</b>
423 (29.7%)	<b>Some; enough to handle the majority of my work content</b>
537 (37.8%)	<b>Yes; have needed very little training to handle the military content of the job</b>

**Figure 13: Military Operational Background as Preparation for Current Tasks**

### **3.6. Working in a Diverse Work Force**

One of the issues consistently raised by senior leaders and staff officers is the complications of working in a military environment where there may be more government civilians, contractors, and interagency and multinational partners than military personnel. Staff officers must prepare many of their work products with input from the diverse members of the command, and then must make presentations to and attend meetings where these partners may be the lead or have equal voice in decisions. Staff officers indicated it was a significant learning experience for them to learn how to communicate and interact with so many different personnel from diverse organizational and national cultures. Senior leaders said that one of the most important areas for improvement was for staff officers to learn and practice the interpersonal skills required for working in a complex population.

#### **3.6.1. Non-supervising Staff Officers**

Staff officers in the site visit discussions across the Combatant Commands said that one of the biggest differences in working in the joint environment was the number of different groups and levels of leaders with whom they work and coordinate tasks. Those in both supervisory and non-supervisory roles indicated that it was one of their biggest challenges on a daily basis trying to coordinate and work with civilians, contractors, multinationals, and interagency personnel. When asked, “With whom and how often to do you work with people

outside your own Service?” staff officers identified their interactions as listed below:

- Of 1,288 respondents who say they work with other US Services, 97% work with them on a daily basis;
- Of 1,242 respondents who say they work with government civilians, 94% work with them on a daily basis;
- Of 1,205 respondents who say they work with contractors, 86% work with them on a daily basis, and another 9% work with them once or twice weekly;
- Of 999 respondents who say they work with interagency personnel, 31% work with them on a daily basis; an additional 30% work with them once or twice a week;
- Of the 990 respondents who say they work with multinational personnel, 21% work with them on a daily basis and an additional 36 % work with them one or more times per month;
- Of the 858 respondents who say they work with individual augmentees, 32% say they work with them on a daily basis, an additional 27% work with them one or more times a month. Of note here: USCENTCOM identified in the Phase One discussions that they have a very large portion of their staff who are individual augmentees and many of the active duty staff officers had never worked with them before so are unfamiliar with the skills and restrictions associated with managing and working with them;
- Staff officers also identified the following categories of personnel they work with regularly: corporate leadership, industry representatives not on contract with command, host nation employees, US Reserve Component personnel, NGO (non-governmental organizations, e.g. the Red Cross), academia representatives.

For 951 staff officers this is their first time working in a joint assignment. As such they said this was the first time for working at this level of interaction with other Service personnel, and that there are some communication issues because of different terminologies. Of the 1,288 who work with members of the other Services, 34% of those—440 staff officers—said they have had no formal training for working with or managing the work the other Services’ personnel.

Joint staff officers feel generally comfortable in working with government civilians; of the 1,282 who report working with them only 107 said this was their first time to work with them. Thirty-five percent (35%)—455 staff officers—report they have had no formal training for working with government civilians and really do not understand their work restrictions, or reward and appraisal programs.

Working with contractors is more troublesome for staff officers as they do not fully understand contract regulations; a large number of survey respondents and discussion group participants say that they do not know how to maximize contractor support. Of the 1,205 respondents who work with contractors on a



regular basis, 272 say this is their first time to work with them, but 37%--443 staff officers—have had no formal training for working with contractor support.

Of the 999 staff officers who say they work regularly with interagency personnel, 481 say this is the first time in their careers where they work regularly with them. Staff officers and leaders say this one of the biggest training requirements if for teaching staff officers how to work more effectively with interagency personnel. Joint staff officers say they need to better understand the roles and responsibilities of the interagency partners within their commands and to learn how to better collaborate. Over 32% of those who say they work with interagency partners say they have never had any formal training for doing so.

For working with multinational partners, 990 staff officers say they work with them as part of their joint assignment, but 326 (33%) have never had any formal training. Staff officers say they have had more experience working with multinationals in their careers than with interagency partners, and only 196 staff officers say this is their first time to work with multinationals.

Active duty staff officers also identified they would like to have had training for working with Guard and Reserve personnel as they did not fully understand the rules and policies governing assignments of Guard members and Reservists. Reserve and Guard personnel during both discussions and the surveys expressed a great deal of frustration at the restrictions under which they must work—particularly the difficulty in getting approval for training.

### **3.6.2. Supervising Staff Officers**

For many of those serving in supervisory roles, predominately O-6s and O-5s, this is their first joint assignment and first time to oversee and rate the work of non-military personnel. In looking at their background and experience for preparing them to supervise a multi-cultural team, survey responses show the following details.

- ***Supervising other Service members***
  - **525** staff officers said they supervise other Service personnel; **99**, or 19%, have never before supervised outside of their own Service;
  - **160**, or 30%, have never had any formal training for managing other Service members;
- ***Supervising government civilians***
  - **376** of the respondents supervise government civilians;
  - **83** , or 22%, have had no prior military experience supervising government civilians;
  - **122**, or 32% have had no formal training for managing civilians;
- ***Supervising contractors***
  - **354** supervise contractors;
  - **80**, or 23%, have had no prior experience supervising contractors;

- 124, or 35% have had no formal training for managing contractors
- **Supervising interagency personnel**
  - 33 supervise interagency personnel;
  - 19, or 58%, have had prior military experience in working with interagency personnel;
  - 17, or 52%, have had any formal training for working with interagency personnel;
- **Supervising multinationals**
  - 45 supervise multinationals;
  - 18, or 40%, of the respondents had no prior military experience supervising multinationals;
  - 32, 71%, have had no formal training for supervising multinationals;
- **Supervising individual augmentees**
  - 128 supervise individual augmentees;
  - 36, or 28%, indicated having no prior military experience in supervising individual augmentees;
  - 57, or 44%, indicated they had no prior formal training for supervising individual augmentees.

In every category, over 30 % of supervisors have had no formal training for managing non-US military personnel. In both discussion groups and in the surveys, supervisors said that it was difficult to understand the career administrative requirements for evaluating, rewarding, and counseling for performance issues.

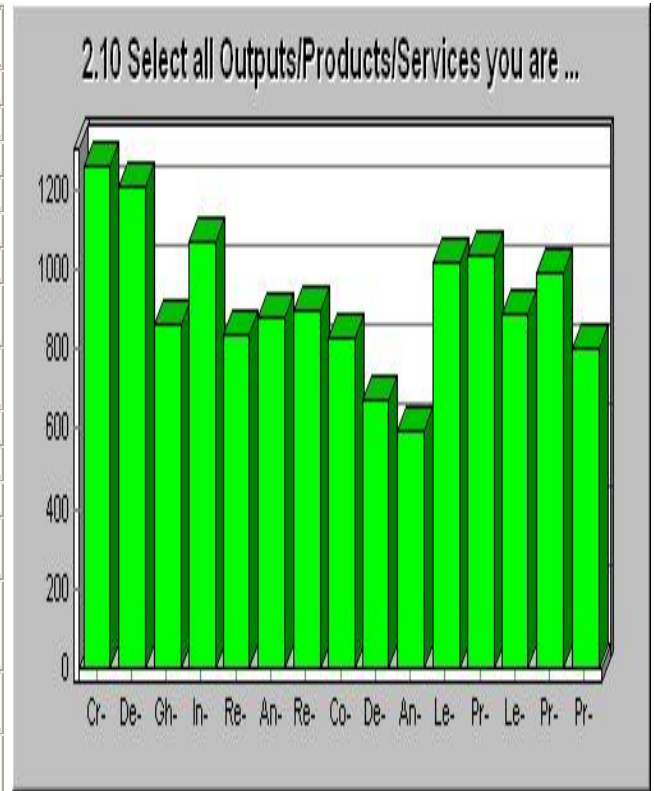
### 3.7. Work Products and Services

Initial steps in determining performance improvements include identifying what tasks personnel perform on a regular basis, as well as the types and frequency of outputs, products, and services expected from their work. During the discussion staff officers listed the types of products they felt were critical tasks for their job; those listed were surprisingly consistent across all directorates, and all commands. Although the subject content changes significantly for some products, e.g., information papers or reports, the process for creating them, managing the review and approval, and finalizing them were consistent. Both group and survey participants reported often feeling overwhelmed with the breadth of new knowledge they have to learn and the volume of tasks they have to manage. As one officer stated, “Shrinking manning in the military plus increasing missions equals less expertise available to meet an increased amount of regular, new, and different kinds of work; officers must manage a widening range of tasks, work across a broader range of topics, but they have very little time to gain depth in any of the areas.” The lack of time to get good at the job was a recurring theme in the discussions.

During Phase One of the study, the participants identified specific types of products and outputs required of them in their current positions; in the Phase Two survey, respondents were asked which of the items on the Phase One list

they are required to create or provide on a regular basis; they were also given the opportunity to add to the list. Figure 14 graphically displays their responses:

Outputs/Products/Services of joint staff officers	#	% of respondents
Create Briefings	1256	88.0%
Deliver Briefings	1203	84.2%
Ghost Writing	860	60.2%
Info Papers	1071	75%
Reports	832	58.3%
Analysis of multiple sources of info	879	61.6%
Reviewing for accuracy other organizations' reports	893	62.5%
Coordination of information from multiple sources into a final product	828	58.0%
Development of plans	669	46.8%
Annexes for plans	597	41.8%
Lead for task inside own directorate	1012	70.9%
Providing input within own directorate for tasks	1033	72.3%
Lead for task requiring coordination across one or more J-codes outside of own directorate within own Combatant Command	886	62.0%
Providing input to other J-codes inside Combatant Command	991	69.4%
Providing input/information to other Combatant Commands	797	55.8%



**Key\*\*** Cr = Create Briefings  
 De = Deliver Briefings  
 GH = Ghost Writing  
 In = Info Papers  
 Re = Reports  
 An = Analysis of Multiple Sources of Info  
 Re = Reviewing the accuracy of other reports  
 Co = Coordination of information from multiple sources

De = Development of Plans  
 An = Annexes for Plans  
 Le = Lead for task inside directorate  
 Pr = Provides input within own directorate  
 Le = Lead for task requiring input from multiple directorates  
 Pr = Providing input to Joint Directorates inside USSTRATCOM  
 Pr = Providing input /information to other Combatant Commands  
**\*\*read in sequential order across x axis**

**Figure 14: Common Outputs and Products of a Joint Staff Officer**

Of the 1,428 survey respondents, 88% create briefings—the most common output for their jobs; and 84% are required to deliver briefings. For every category except two, over 55% of joint staff officers are required to develop the product or deliver the service as work requirements; even in the two lowest ranked categories, development of plans and annexes for plans, 40% of respondents are required to create them. This list comprises foundational work-based requirements for joint staff officers; these are the products which must be created, and once created staff officers must coordinate and manage each throughout the joint system to closure, which in some cases is on-going for months and years. Normally each staff officer is managing multiple projects,

developing multiple products, and coordinating multiple tasks simultaneously, so proficiency and efficiency are key success factors.

The four outputs and products identified as most common are creating and delivering briefings, writing info papers, and providing input to others within respective directorates. The products and services identified by staff officers in both Phases One and Two of the study are fundamental tasks which are process and activity-based. When the breadth of the content matter is considered, something as basic as writing a business letter or e-mail becomes increasingly complex—for example, when it is ghost written for a senior officer in a content area for which the writer is not the subject matter expert. Staff officers must switch back and forth across content areas, functioning as subject matter experts in some areas (by assignment, not always by content expertise), and as researchers and coordinators in secondary areas of responsibility. Exceptional writing skills, analytical skills, presentation skills, and interpersonal skills are needed to perform the requisite tasks listed, in Figure 14 above. Staff officers consistently reported they can usually find the military and content knowledge they need, but the lack of technical proficiency required—such as writing at a strategic level—is something they cannot easily do by themselves or through colleagues; very little targeted training exists for teaching these skills.

The products and services identified in Figure 14 are general categories; for each category, however, there may be hundreds of different types, each with a specific format. The skills, however, to produce a report, are the same regardless of the type; each type has levels of complexity based on intended audience, strategic intent, format requirements, tools needed to complete, coordination requirements, and content. Training can teach the requisite skills needed to produce the required work products.

Once they receive a task, staff officers report they spend a large portion of their time determining who they need to coordinate with, then trying to locate those individuals. But the most significant amount of time is spent in research, analysis, and writing. One of the significant problems is that staff officers are required to develop products with a strategic focus. Since the majority of them come directly from a tactical assignment, very few have the understanding of what strategic means in context of a Combatant Command mission.

The charts and information in the following subsections provide a more detailed description of the requirements associated with the 15 foundational products and services identified in the survey (see Figure 14).

### **3.7.1. Work Time Spent on Writing Tasks (excluding briefings)**

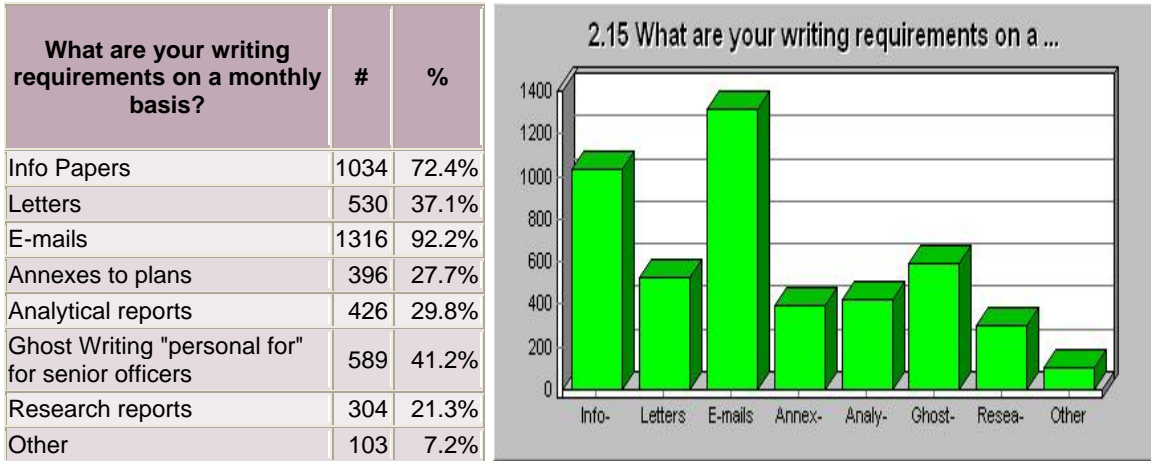
One of the primary staff officer requirements is to write at an executive level. As already identified, staff officers are required to lead or participate in a number of activities which are writing-based. According to survey feedback, the average

joint staff officer spends 40% of work time on written tasks such as e-mails, information papers, various reports, ghost writing, and plans. A consistent complaint from senior leaders across all Combatant Commands is that staff officers' writing skills are below par for a strategic level organization; they need both training in writing for a strategically focused executive organization and in fundamental skills such as grammar and spelling. Staff officers know they need to write strategically, but said they had little to no training to do so, and do not know where to get the training. Staff officers across all the commands consistently stated they would like to be able to pay more attention to the quality of written tasks, but the volume of work is so heavy, they reluctantly sacrifice quality to handle the quantity—cutting and pasting is the way of doing business.

Most staff officers felt their inexperience in a strategic environment limited their writing abilities. Since 43% of authorized joint staff officer billets are O-4 or below, officers filling those positions are normally coming directly from tactical military assignments with no involvement in the strategic planning or thinking levels required at a Combatant Command. As well, their requirement to write more formalized papers, letters, and e-mails at a Combatant Command level, and analytical reports at a strategic level is, as one staff officer put it, "...like moving to a hostile, alien environment." Writing or developing briefings on a strategic level is rarely taught anywhere in their Service or civilian university programs; in fact the only program mentioned that had a section of a course dedicated to strategic writing was the Naval Postgraduate School.

Staff officers also recognized a need to analyze and synthesize large amounts of information into a concise, brief format for senior level review. Staff officers understand, and have been told, that the tendency is for them to include too much information. They are concerned, however, that because they are not experts in the subject areas, they might omit critical information out of the packet due to their lack of knowledge; their tendency is to err on the side of including too much information and letting the reader decide what is important. Because they have so many staffing packages to handle on a daily basis, it is easier to cut and paste quantities of material for each tasker than it is to fine tune. Staff officers acknowledged they were more focused on getting taskers out by due dates, which by necessity made them forego quality of format and content because they had so little time for thorough analysis and research.

When asked to identify the types of writing tasks they address on a monthly basis, joint staff officers provided the following breakdown in Figure 15, with the most common tasks being e-mail correspondence and writing information papers.



**Figure 15: Breakdown of joint Staff Officer Monthly Writing Requirements**

Figure 16 below identifies some of the additional work products staff officers are required to produce as included in the “other” category of Figure 15.

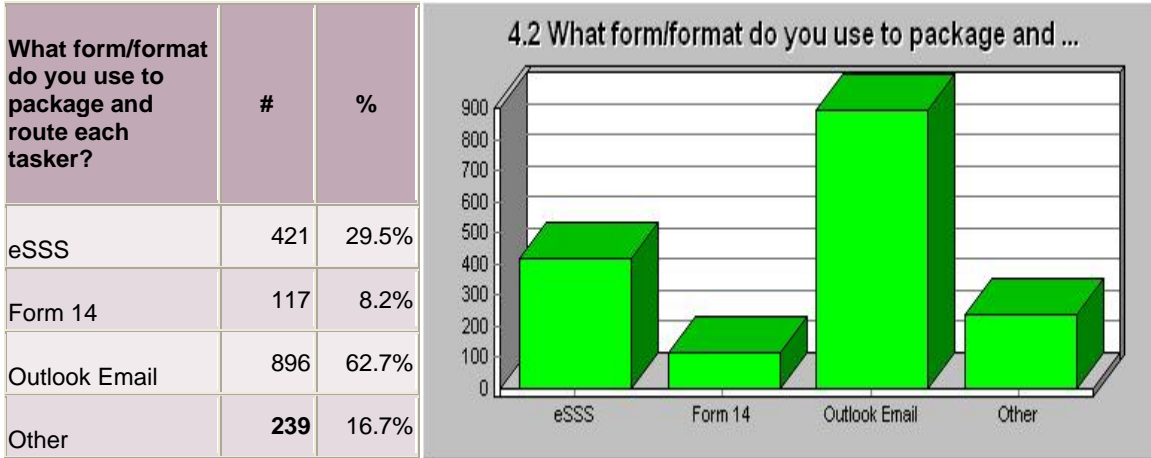
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>--Academic papers</li> <li>--Activity reports</li> <li>--After action reports</li> <li>--Answers to RFIs</li> <li>--Articles for publication</li> <li>--Assessment Reports</li> <li>--Awards/Decs/LOA</li> <li>--"BLUFs"</li> <li>--Clinical Updates</li> <li>--Congressional testimony</li> <li>--CONOPS</li> <li>--Continuity books</li> <li>--Evaluations/ fitness reports/</li> <li>--Performance Reports</li> <li>--Event Books</li> <li>--Guidance to field personnel (ODCs, etc)</li> <li>--Informational "5x8"s</li> <li>--Intel reports</li> <li>--Interagency memoranda</li> <li>--Itineraries</li> <li>--Legal drafts and opinions</li> <li>--Legal Reviews, Agreements</li> <li>--Logs</li> <li>--Meeting minutes/record of discussion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>--Messages</li> <li>--Minutes and Action ItemTask Lists from bilateral conferences</li> <li>--MOUs with other commands and agencies</li> <li>--News Related Products</li> <li>--Operating instructions</li> <li>--OPLANS</li> <li>--Orders</li> <li>--Policy/ policy memoranda</li> <li>--Position papers</li> <li>--Program documentation</li> <li>--Project Updates</li> <li>--Proposals</li> <li>--Publications</li> <li>--Public Release</li> <li>--Record Message traffic</li> <li>--Regulations / SOPs</li> <li>--Reports to Commander</li> <li>--Requests for Information</li> <li>--Requirements documents</li> <li>--Reviewing draft doctrine</li> <li>--Reviewing documents &amp; providing comments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>--Seminars</li> <li>--SITREPs</li> <li>--Software requirements</li> <li>--Speeches</li> <li>--Staff Packages</li> <li>--Staff summary sheets</li> <li>--Statements of Objectives</li> <li>--Statements of Work</li> <li>--Supervisor Req's (EPR/OPR/etc.)</li> <li>--Synopses for taskers</li> <li>--System status updates</li> <li>--Talking points for media engagement</li> <li>--Tear-Lines</li> <li>--Test Plans</li> <li>--Test Reports</li> <li>--TMS Task evaluation/ comment</li> <li>--Tracking forms</li> <li>--Trip books</li> <li>--Trip reports</li> <li>--Watch logs</li> <li>--Web pages</li> <li>--Weekly Activity Reports</li> </ul>
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**Figure 16: Examples of Specific Work Products Required of Joint Staff Officers**

### 3.7.2. Formats

During the discussions in Phase One of the study, staff officers identified three principal formats used to route and manage staffing packages. In the Phase Two

surveys, although the majority of staff officers say they use Outlook e-mail as their primary format, staff officers identified 20 additional formats which are used across the commands other than the three listed in Figure 17. In some cases three or more different formats are used within a single command, making it more difficult for coordination and causing duplicative efforts. One of the requests from both staff officers and senior leaders was for the Joint Staff to standardize the formats and processes for managing staffing packages within and across the Combatant Commands.



**Figure 17: Forms and Formats Used to Package and Route Taskers**

During the on-site visits, several commands raised an issue concerning enforcement of formats for different work products. Staff officers said that in some cases each directorate has a different format for the same product, and when a product must be coordinated across directorates that meant creating multiple formats of the same product. When asked on the survey whether formats were enforced within the command, 83% of respondents said they are, and 17% say they are not. Although the general consensus is that work product templates and formats are well enforced across the command, the results of the survey indicate it may be they are enforced within the directorates, but not across the command since the number of formats varies significantly. In anecdotal comments staff officers cited that finding and learning the various formats for all the different products was one of the most frustrating and difficult parts of their jobs. Although several of the commands have an on-line action officer toolkit which provides samples and instructions for some formats, staff officers said that a training class within the first few weeks on site would be extremely helpful in building a job reference library. Additionally staff officers felt that if the Joint Staff would push for a standard tasking process and a standard set of formats for products, the tasking would become significantly more efficient, and training would be standardized across all commands.

### 3.7.3. Creating and Delivering Briefings

Most staff officers say they have been creating and delivering briefings since the beginning of their careers. However, this is an area senior leadership sees as requiring improvement in order to improve content-creation and presentation skills. Senior leaders identified three specific categories for general improvement needed in the area of creating briefings:

- (1) Staff officers need a higher skill level with PowerPoint than they have normally used in prior assignments for creating more complex briefings
- (2) Staff officers need to be better able to synthesize large amounts of information; the tendency is to include too much
- (3) Staff officers need to be better able to provide concise, strategic courses of action in their briefings, with back up details as requested.

According to staff officers, they spend, on average, 33% of the work week on briefings—19% spent in *preparing* their own, as well as an additional 14% in contributing information to other briefs. Frequency of creating briefings varied significantly, with 11.8% of respondents required to create briefs on a daily basis, and .9% required to create less than one brief per year. The highest percentage, 31.4%, was for creating weekly briefs.

The following chart gives a better understanding of the how much time staff officers spend in preparing and delivering briefings. On a monthly basis, almost 70% of joint staff officers create and present one to five briefings, and 57% contribute information for an additional one to five.

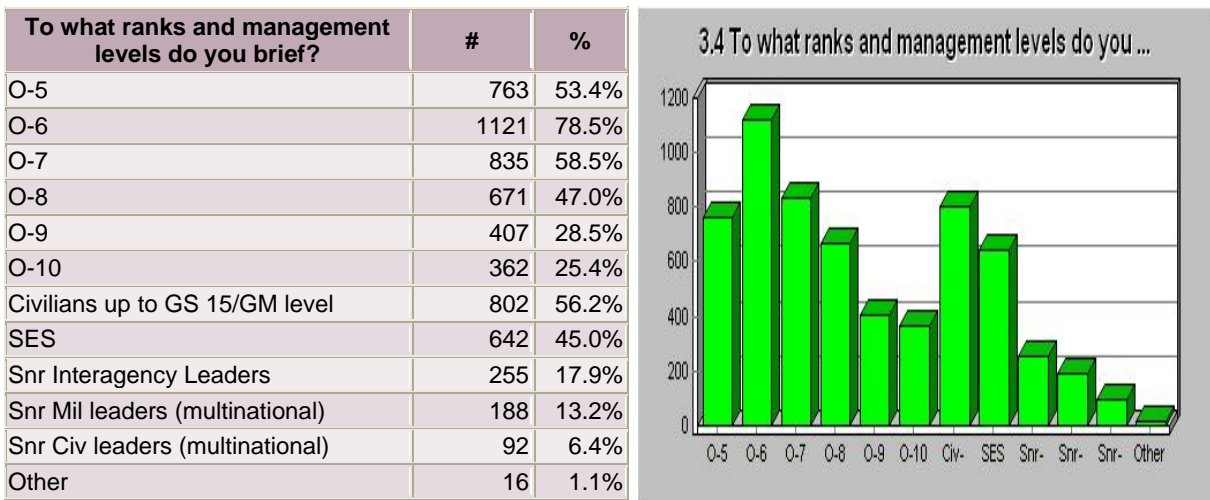
How many briefings do you typically create on a monthly basis?	# of respondents	%	How many briefings do you contribute information on a monthly basis?	# of respondents	%	How many briefings given on a monthly basis?	# of respondents	%
0 (None)	138	9.9%	0 (None)	13	5%	0 (none)	267	19.2%
<b>1 – 5</b>	<b>969</b>	<b>69.5%</b>	<b>1 – 5</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>56.6%</b>	<b>1-5</b>	<b>959</b>	<b>69.1%</b>
6 – 10	159	11.4%	6 -10	53	20.5%	11-15	21	1.5%
11 – 15	51	3.7%	11 – 15	18	7%	6-10	87	6.3%
More than 15	78	5.6%	More than 15	28	10.9%	More than 15	54	3.9%
Total	1395	100%	Total	258	100%	Total	1388	100%
(N/A)	33		(N/A)	5		No Answer	40	

**Figure 18: Frequency for Creating Briefing Materials**

Another issue raised by staff officers during the site visits was the breadth of personnel and ranks to which they are required to give presentations—generally, a very different audience than they had briefed in their Service assignments. Most of the commands allow the staff officer working a task to give briefings. But as one senior leader pointed out, staff officers need to arrive in a Combatant



Command with exceptional briefing skills, because rarely do supervisors have time to train personnel how to brief. Figure 19 below indicates the grade levels to which joint staff officers regularly brief. Almost 59% of respondents say they brief at the O-7 GO/FO level, 47% at the O-8 level, and 56% at the senior government civilian level; and between 25 and 29% of the 1,428 survey respondents brief all the way to the O-9 and O-10 levels. The higher the rank, the more pre-briefs, reviews, and revisions and coordination required. For many of the staff officers this is the first time in their careers for briefing at such senior levels; they recognize the need for a higher level of proficiency in their analytical and coordination skills to prepare the brief, and a need for good presentation skills for delivering the brief.



**Figure 19: Briefing Levels for Joint Staff Officers**

Staff officers did not report serious difficulty with the technical aspect of creating briefings, as a general rule, since this is a task common to the Services as a principal means of communication. Only 32 respondents, 3%, reported this as the first time in his/her career required to create briefings. Senior leaders see the biggest weakness of staff officers in briefings as difficulty in understanding the Commander's intent, ability to synthesize complex ideas and large amounts of information into concise courses of action, and ability to present in a clear and authoritative manner. Staff officers identified the primary hurdles they face when creating briefings as understanding the intent of the briefing, getting focused guidance from supervisors and getting input from those with pertinent information, and, as one officer succinctly stated, "Researching, boiling down complex problems into short, concise briefings that can stand on their own - coffee table books - is very difficult."

Another area for improvement identified by senior leaders across the commands was for staff officers to develop better presentation skills. In a Combatant Command, staff officers are usually required to work with a very diverse population which includes senior civilians, members of other US government

agencies, contractors, and multinationals. These types of audience sometimes require different and more collaborative approaches than what is normal in a purely military environment where people are used to responding to rank and follow a specific briefing style. Staff officers cited that non-military style briefings often include much more interaction and questioning during presentations, a very different approach than what most are used to.

Staff officers felt comfortable in their ability to deliver briefings, and in fact, 96% of the respondents rated the task of delivering briefings as easy to moderately easy, the only task that rated that high for ease of performance. Ironically, one of the top staff officer tasks senior leaders identified as needing improvement was briefing skills—both in the creation and delivery aspects. Staff officers understand that briefings are a mainstay of their careers, but as one officer pointed out, one of the differences in working at a four-star command is that the “Difficulty level depends on the level of leader being briefed. It is more difficult to coordinate the higher the rank of the leader.”

#### **3.7.4. Ghost Writing**

Approximately 30% of the 622 survey respondents who said ghost writing is one of their regular tasks said they are required to ghost write for the first time in their careers. 54% say this is a task required one or more times a week. For difficulty, on a scale of one to five (with five as the most difficult), 83% rated ghost writing at 1 to 3—a moderately easy task. Staff officers understand the need for ghost writing for letters, papers, and more formal communications, and appear to be relatively comfortable doing so. Data shows that ghost writing is a significant part of a staff officer’s task set; the biggest obstacles appear to be the ability to quickly assess the style of the senior leader for whom the writing is being done, and the format and writing skills required to write the various products—articles for magazines, correspondence, etc. Staff officers identified that there is a level associated with this task that is different from other tasks in that you are trying to speak for the leader for whom you are writing, a difficult process until you have time to understand the leader’s individual style.

#### **3.7.5. Frequency of Information Papers**

Seventy-one percent (71%) of joint staff officers reported writing information papers one or more times per month. Info papers require writing, analytical, research and coordination skills; staff officers they are rarely the content experts so must spend significant time in research. The command staff officers feel very comfortable with the creation of this product. Twenty-one percent (21%) of the staff officers reported this as the first time in their careers to create this type of product. Only 10 staff officers rated this task at a 5, very difficult. Some of the difficulties encountered include finding and collecting the necessary data and the ability to synthesize large amount of information into a cogent package without

losing the focus.

### **3.7.6. Reports**

Approximately 750 staff officers said writing reports is part of their regular work requirements. Only 10% reported this as the first time in their careers required to write reports, with only 6% rating this at a 4 or 5, a difficult to very difficult task. The term “report” is very broad and covers, as previously mentioned, a large range of topics and formats. Approximately 76% report this as a task required one or more times a month. Staff officers reported almost no hindrances with the process for writing reports. They indicated they had learned this skill in their operational and career experiences, and that geographical separation from the command, time constraints, and keeping the types of reports required straight were the primary issues. This is a task, however, which consumes a large portion of work time and is writing intensive.

### **3.7.7. Analysis of Multiple Sources of Information**

Being required to analyze multiple sources of information, extract critical points, synthesize the salient information, and provide concise strategic courses of action is a high level task on Bloom’s educational taxonomy. This is a competency, say senior leaders across all the commands, where staff officers need improvement in writing strategically, and in improving grammar, sentence structure, analysis and synthesis of information—all of which could and should be, they believe, addressed with specialized training. Staff officers are keenly aware of the requirement to think and write more strategically, and acknowledge they would like to be able to focus more on quality of products, but that volume and intensity of work, and high priorities are bigger motivators to just get products through the pipeline. Staff officers expressed a desire to have, as they called it, “leisure time” to analyze materials, but in order to respond to the multiple types of tasks that come across their desks on a weekly basis, they rely heavily on cutting and pasting from the materials of their predecessors and from research efforts. Originality of thinking and writing, generally in their views, are luxuries. Yet approximately 80% of the almost 850 respondents say this is a moderate to very easy task. One hundred twenty (120) respondents said this was the first time in their careers they have been required to analyze multiple sources of information and synthesize the findings. 600 staff officers reported this as a common task required one or more times per month, with 130 required to work on this kind of task on a daily basis. As one staff officer pointed out about analyzing multiple resources, “Collecting the sources is the hard part.”

### **3.7.8. Reviewing Other Organizations’ Reports for Accuracy**

Reviewing other organizations' reports for accuracy is another high level skill where staff officers are required to act as editors and subject matter experts while understanding the individual customer's objectives. 87% of the 812 who reported this as a common task, say this is a task they manage one or more times per month. Almost 200 staff officers report this as the first time in their careers at this level of detail for this task; 10% rated this at a 4 or 5 level of difficulty.

### **3.7.9. Coordination of Information from Multiple Sources for Final Product**

Another high frequency, high density task—for approximately 613 (81%) of the 754 joint staff officers who responded—is providing coordination of information from multiple sources on a regular basis, at least once a month or more. The primary competencies required are networking and collaboration skills, as a large amount of time is normally spent on identifying those needed to provide input, those needed to review the final product, in persuading those involved to participate in a timely manner, and in getting those required to sign off on the final product. Staff officers say that one of the biggest surprises—and one of the most frustrating parts of the coordination process—is the reluctance of people within the command to share information. Eighteen percent (18%) of the respondents to this question said this was the first time this task was required of them; 70 people (9%) rated this as a difficult to very difficult task.

One staff officer said of the coordination process from multiple resources, “You have to draw conclusions to provide the ‘so what’ to your audience. Without it, the brief goes nowhere and is a waste of time for all.” But perhaps the biggest challenge to this task is that, “Coordination is difficult when you wield no authority,” as another staff officer pointed out. The more junior officers and those at the O-5 level say that lack of joint knowledge—to include an understanding of the roles of multinational and interagency partners—increased significantly the time needed to get these tasks completed.

### **3.7.10. Development of Plans and Annexes for Plans**

One staff officer likened the task of creating plans to, “building the pyramids single handedly with a thousand overseers waiting to flog your lack of progress.” The ability to develop plans and annexes to plans—whether small and short term, or highly complex and long term—requires yet another set of higher order skills and competencies such as the capacity to visualize the end objective, and to work backwards to identify the processes and milestones required to achieve the final goal. Over 600 people reported having to develop plans, and approximately 550 develop annexes to plans. Thirty-one percent (31%) of respondents say this is their first time required to develop plans, and 41% for annexes to plans. For difficulty level, approximately 28% who say they must develop plans and annexes say the difficulty level is at a 4 or 5, difficult and very

difficult. For frequency, 337 identified writing plans as a task addressed one or more times a month. For annexes, 196 say they create annexes one or more times per month; 201 staff officers, or 37% of respondents, say they create annexes on a quarterly basis. A number of staff officers said they had never had any experience with JOPES, a specialized system for joint planning activities, and had to learn on their own while they were also learning all the other aspects of being a staff officer. Additionally they provided the following comments when asked to identify any difficulties with writing plans and annexes:

- *Determining strategic vision is difficult when different leaders have different visions;*
- *Inflexible planning timelines often sacrifice product quality for punctuality;*
- *Writing the plan is easy. Developing the approach is more difficult and requires input from others;*
- *Still trying to find all resources for proper format and learn nuances of assigning responsibility; not defined by any instruction;*
- *Absorbing documents and making them nest with the base is difficult.*
- *Not first time for planning, but never at this level/scale;*
- *Coordinating with other components for input can be trying as well as the adjudication process that follows;*
- *Familiarity with JOPES was the major hurdle;*
- *Challenging sometimes, depending on the situation and what we are planning. We do contingency, operational and strategic plans;*
- *No training, many rules, morphing Security Cooperation structure;*
- *[It is} Difficult to "invent" a directorate's role in a program without supervisory guidance.*

### **3.7.11. Leading and Participating in Tasks and Providing Information**

Staff officers in site discussion meetings indicated that leading a project and providing input to tasks within their own directorates, within the command, and across the Combatant Commands is also a large portion of their work time. The primary challenge was to learn to work a task collaboratively with the people with whom they shared an office on a regular basis. Working tasks across multiple J-codes requires a different kind of collaboration in trying to get people to share information and to respond to requests within the allotted time frame.

Of the 919 survey respondents who have been the lead for a project inside their own directorate, 25% said it was their first time to do so; over 10% rated this as a difficult to very difficult task. Of the 814 who said they have served as a project lead across other directorates, 57% indicated this was the first time to do so, and 25 % indicated this as a difficult to very difficult task. For providing information within their own directorate, 76% indicate this is at least a once a week task. Over 57% say they are required to provide information to other directorates one or more times a week. Overall, staff officers cited very few technical problems with leading and participating in tasks, whether internal to the directorate or

across the command, except for the need for a better “e-staffing tool” to improve/increase collaboration. They did identify communication issues across the directorates as an issue—such as geographical distances among participants, finding the right points of contact (POCs) for the task, getting other J-codes to respond in a timely manner, and getting guidance from senior leaders. Additionally the rank of the staff officer could be a hindrance; the lower the rank the more difficult to get people to respond, because apparently rank of the staff officer indicates the level of importance placed on a task.

### **3.8. Tools, Software, and Systems Used in Daily Work**

The steep and lengthy learning curve for staff officers is, in part, due to the number and complexity of some of the tools staff officers are required to use on a daily basis. For some, this was the first time in their careers where their work required them to use the common command-specific and joint-specific tools (e.g., JOPES, JTIMS). With no formal training available for most of the systems, staff officers are usually dependent on the “learning by doing” process and on the assistance of the government civilians and contractors with whom they work on a daily basis.

One of the requests from staff officers and senior leaders is for the Joint Staff to lead the way in selecting a single standard tool for task management. Staff officers said that it was often difficult to work across commands because systems were incompatible. From the data collected for the study it was determined that:

- Each command has its own task management system
- Each command has its own web portal system
- Each command selects its own LMS
- In addition to common tools (e.g., JOPES, JWICS, JTIMS, additional Microsoft Office tools) the commands identified approximately **250 additional** technical tools...USTRATCOM alone identified 50 additional unclassified tools its staff officers use.

Staff officers identified the common required tools for their jobs as follows:

- Microsoft Office
  - Word for document creation and editing
  - Outlook—primary tool for written communication, time management, and file management.
    - staff officers usually get buried in e-mails
    - need good management/organization skills for filing and understanding the rules
  - PowerPoint—requires a higher level of expertise and application than in prior assignments; one of the biggest areas of concern was taking abstract strategic ideas and turning them into clearly depicted, concise slides. Since briefings are the primary method for group communication, not knowing how to use the tool well is a hindrance to job performance.

- SIPRNET/NIPRNET—a common tool across all Services... identified as one of many systems required to perform daily tasks; however, all taskers are on the SIPRNET, even though not all are classified; this creates extra work, and limits assignment of tasks
- Tasking Management Systems—e.g., for some commands it is TMS, for TRANSCOM it is STACSWeb---
- AHMS-DMS—the Defense military messaging system, with many user and technology difficulties associated with this system
- Broad variety of web-based tools—critical for staff officers for conducting significant research of subject matter content
- Action Officer/Staff Officer Guides—online toolkits
- JOPES—Joint Operation Planning and Exercise System...not everyone needs to use it on a daily basis, but most acknowledged the need for a general understanding of both the tool and the planning process.
- Collaborative planning tools
- Joint tools such as DRRS (Defense Readiness Reporting System)
- JTIMS (Joint Training Information Management System)
- JFAST (Joint Flow and Analysis System for Transportation; JFAST is an unfunded JFCOM tool, so training is unavailable)
- SMS—Single Mobility System
- JSIDS—Joint Services Imagery Digitizing System

The largest amount of work time is spent with taskers, either initiating, coordinating, or providing input to them. Although the volume of work is high, the number one complaint from staff officers across all commands is the tasking management tool used—none of the individual command's tools rated well. Staff officers from the discussion groups and the surveys agreed with senior leaders that most are not user-friendly at the directorate level. Due to lack of training, practice, and familiarity with the systems, some people are reluctant to use them at all and by-pass them when possible. Staff officers agreed that efficiencies could be gained by using Outlook tools for many of the taskers, and think that the command-specific tools are:

- onerous, and lose data—staff officers and leaders alike say that many times staff officers will just enter “coordinate without comment” because the system is so difficult to use. However, it appears that responding to a tasker is much easier than initiating one;
- archaic—a command level tracking system needs to be more than a tracking system, it needs to be more of a business process;
- not regulated—front offices of each J-code use TMS as a pass-through tool; there is no flow control;
- not user friendly, not intuitive—is designed at an expert user application level, not at the novice level, and is difficult even for those who are technology savvy.

Staff officers have significant problems with both the technical and the process aspects of the system. Although one staff officer said that the only good thing

about his command's system is that it keeps an action officer/staff officer "honest" by holding him/her accountable. A few of the system have an on-line tutorial, but no embedded help or wizard and most staff officers are not aware of the on-line help.

Staff officers acknowledged that the number of systems they had to use and the number of passwords required was daunting; one staff officer had 15 different logins and passwords required for his daily work. Even though there are many technical systems in use within each J-code there is little or no formal training available on systems used within the commands, to include training for JCIDS, JOPES, and other joint systems. A few officers had been to military schools where some of the systems were introduced, and a few used the tools in their career fields so were familiar with them. For the majority of staff officers, however, the tools were new so had to be learned through on-the-job training, primarily through the trial and error method, at the same time they were working staff products and learning organizational and joint specifics.

The majority of staffing work is done using Microsoft Office products—Outlook, Word, PowerPoint, and Excel. Both leadership and staff officers agreed there should be a minimum competency standard for incoming staff officers in Microsoft Office suite—which they recognize as one of the very few standard tools across DOD. One participant recommended that people become Microsoft Office certified as a prerequisite for the job. A disconnect exists in knowledge of current training available for Microsoft products within the commands; very few of the staff officers in the discussion groups knew there were on site courses available. Those who did know, said there was very little time to attend or could not get released from work to attend the training. Senior leadership said that many of the staff officers do not arrive with the level of competency in the tools needed to handle some of the most fundamental tasks, and that most need a refresher course and/or training for a higher application level.

Since most tasks are writing-centric, Word and PowerPoint are the primary document development tools. Of interest is the majority of staff officers are self-taught, and are probably not using the technologies to their maximum proficiency. Very few have ever attended formal classroom training or taken on-line classes and their self-learning is product specific rather than software-capabilities based. Currently no proficiency or assessment test is provided upon entering the command to see who needs training to improve skill levels. Of the survey respondents **48.5%** have had **no training** in Microsoft Word; **58.6%** have had **no training** in PowerPoint; **58%** have had no training in Excel; and **45%** have had **no training** in the command's tasking management system—the primary tools used daily in their jobs. Although Microsoft Project was not mentioned very often, for those who needed it for their jobs, the lack of training was a critical issue for task completion.

Another common issue across the Combatant Commands is that the volume of e-mails is staggering. Since this is the primary communication and coordination



mode, the use of Outlook for writing, managing, filing and organizing e-mails and attachments is critical. Staff officers in general said they needed more training in organization and filing and learning how to better use Outlook.

Staff officers say they “live and die” by their skill level with Microsoft Office products. Word and PowerPoint are the primary document development tools and Outlook is the e-mail software for, managing, filing and organizing e-mails and attachments. Most staff officers interviewed felt like their individual competencies were good to excellent, but acknowledged having to ratchet up their competency levels in each of the Microsoft Office tools for working at a Combatant Command level. Excel and Access appear to be more widely used across some commands than others.

Another system mentioned as difficult but necessary to use is the Defense Messaging System. Officers dreaded any tasking that required use of the system, and said it was a “learning by doing” system, and a very difficult one in the best of circumstances.

The NIPRNET is a communications tool common to the Services; most people started using this system early in their careers. However, the system does have a few technical issues, as several staff officers pointed out. One of the complaints was that, “Many work related web sites are unnecessarily blocked.” Few people have ever had any formal training, and have learned on the job.

SIPRNET is the classified version of NIPRNET and is one of the primary joint communication tools; it is the one classified tool discussed in the study because most staffing packages are sent via the SIPRNET, so it is a critical tool for joint staff officers. Approximately 43% of survey respondents have had no formal training. “The most challenging part of the SIPRNET,” according to one respondent, “is using the search engines to find what you need.” One of the issues with the SIPRNET is working with multinational partners; all staffing packages—whether classified or unclassified—are sent via the SIPRNET. In USNORTHCOM/NORAD, for example, Canadian officers cannot use the system because it is classified; since many are assigned as staff officers, in order to handle the unclassified packages, US personnel have set up legitimate workarounds which allow Canadian personnel to participate in working tasks. In USTRANSCOM one of the issues was that there were a limited number of SIPRNET stations and staff officers had to wait in line to send or receive information.

The tools which have already been discussed in this section are the primary “work horses” for the majority of staff officer work. Many other specialized systems are used by the individual commands and by directorates which are not covered here, but are part of individual staff officers’ required learning when entering the job. As an example of the numbers and complexities of systems per command, Figure 20 is a list of some of the systems (many of them password enabled) used by USSTRATCOM staff officers.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access</li> <li>• AMHS</li> <li>• APS .</li> <li>• AWPS</li> <li>• Blackberry</li> <li>• BUPERS</li> <li>• C2BMC</li> <li>• C2PC <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Comment:</b> training not very useful; mostly relied on past experience coupled with trial and error</li> </ul> </li> <li>• CCICS2</li> <li>• CATS/GIS</li> <li>• C-CPDSR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Comment:</b> archaic system, but still used across NMCC/NORAD &amp; forward users</li> </ul> </li> <li>• DCPS</li> <li>• DCTS</li> <li>• DITPR</li> <li>• DRRS</li> <li>• DSRN</li> <li>• DTS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Comment:</b> What a terribly time consuming and distracting system--I've heard more complaints about this than anything else.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• EADSIM</li> <li>• eMILPO</li> <li>• GFC/DMETS</li> <li>• GOC CE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Comment:</b> Somehow I am supposed to be able to find everything and edit it, I'd really like training.</li> <li><b>Comment:</b> Very complicated if not used daily</li> </ul> </li> <li>• HPAC</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IBM SameTime <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Comment:</b> STRAT Collaboration Tool <b>Comment :-</b> not as friendly as IWS. . . can't have open multiple chat rooms, have to set up meetings. . .</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Intellipedia</li> <li>• ISPAN <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Comment:</b> Permission often difficult to obtain, password management is also time consuming and often difficult.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• IWMDT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Comment:</b> Still in development</li> </ul> </li> <li>• IWS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Comment:</b> STRAT Collaboration Tool</li> </ul> </li> <li>• JOPES</li> <li>• JTT</li> <li>• JWICS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Comment:</b> Not as easy to use as NIPRNET or SIPRNET</li> <li><b>Comment:</b> roaming profiles are nice, so very easy</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Logs and Records Program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Comment:</b> Everyone avoids this like the plague--I can't even remember the name of it.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• M3/AMHS</li> <li>• MCS</li> <li>• MGPS/DARTS</li> <li>• Microsoft Database</li> <li>• Microsoft Visio</li> <li>• Missile Graphics Planning System <b>Comment:</b> Extremely complicated software requires a lot of training to be able to use--easy to use once proficiency attained</li> <li>• MIDB</li> <li>• MILPDF</li> <li>• MIRC Chat</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MyBiz</li> <li>• NCES</li> <li>• NIDS II</li> <li>• NSANet</li> <li>• Nuclear Planning and Execution System (NPES) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Comment:</b> Unix based system, fairly hard to use/ not intuitive. Need classroom training to be effective</li> </ul> </li> <li>• PDAS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Comment:</b> terrible system</li> </ul> </li> <li>• PDSM</li> <li>• PDWIN</li> <li>• Red Switch</li> <li>• RELCAN <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Comment:</b> Tuned-down SIPRNET for NORAD use</li> </ul> </li> <li>• SGN</li> <li>• Sharepoint</li> <li>• SI/TK systems</li> <li>• SKIWeb <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Comment:</b> SKIWeb is STRATCOM's interactive blogshpere</li> </ul> </li> <li>• STRATWEB Training Data Base <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Comment:</b> No formal training provided</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Tandberg</li> <li>• TS Net <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Comment:</b> Need to wait almost six weeks after reporting for account to be granted</li> </ul> </li> <li>• VPN Software for remote email connectivity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Comment:</b> Sometimes very quirky software - would prefer to use Outlook Web Access</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Wiki <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Comment:</b> This should be easier, but isn't</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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**Figure 20: Other USSTRATCOM Tools, Systems, Software Required for Work Tasks**

Another impact on work performance is accessibility to the tools required to perform tasks. Survey respondents identified quite a number of unclassified tools, which are used on a regular basis but are not accessible at their desks. The more often staff officers have to leave their work area and the further they have to go creates interruptions for staying on task and staying focused. In many cases more than 100 people shared a printer—sometimes in rooms distant from the work desk. Personnel who work in remote buildings have to drive in to get to

some of the tools. Each Combatant Command was given, within their individual site reports, a list of the tools staff officers had listed which were not accessible from their desks, with distances away and problems with use so that the commands could address these issues as organizational-related.

### **3.9. Obstacles to Getting Work Done**

As one staff officer described the job, “We are a funnel for all information going into the front office, so by the very nature of our jobs, we are constantly 'responding' to requests for info, running down packages, coordinating and facilitating calendars and events.” And another said, “In short, we are all ‘mini’ administrative armies of one.” With the content of the job so dynamic based on current events, staff officers look for stability in processes, established standards, and guidance from supervisors and senior leaders. In a complex environment like a Combatant Command, work processes and communication channels can easily get overburdened by the volume of work or how they are used. When people begin to take shortcuts and create workarounds standards generally have become ineffective. Staff officers were asked to identify what they considered to be the biggest obstacles to getting work completed and what workarounds they have created to more efficiently complete their work. Each Combatant Command was provided detailed information about the organizational specific issues within their organizations. For this combined report a summary of the primary organizational issues follow:

**Tasking Process Issues:** Staff officers in all commands feel the tasking process in general is out of sync, and that there is room for significant improvements from the Joint Staff down the chain to the individual. From the Joint Staff perspective, according to staff officers there is little coordination across the J-codes before a task is sent out to the commands; resulting in overlap and duplication of efforts. Also, when the Joint Directorates send out publications for review, the same amount of review time is allowed regardless of the length of the document---15 pages or 300 pages; staff officers say that when the review time and the size of the document are not compatible they normally just respond “Concur with No Comments.” Within the commands, one of the biggest common concerns is how taskers get assigned. Each command seems to have its own system for assigning tasks, but none got high marks from staff officers. One of the primary complaints is that taskers are often improperly assigned to the wrong group within a directorate, but once a staff officer has received a tasker, it is virtually impossible to give it back to be reassigned to the correct directorate. The electronic tasking management systems across the commands, are generally disliked by all, and were categorized as “cumbersome,” “onerous,” and “ineffective.”

**Coordination Issues:** This topic received more comments than any other, which is not surprising since this is the area where staff officers spend most of their communication efforts. Comments were consistent across commands. Staff

officers say the initial issue is finding the right people at the right levels with the accurate information needed for a particular task. If that happens, the next issue becomes getting input and feedback in a timely manner. The perplexing part of the issue, according to anecdotal comments, is the reluctance of people to share information; some commands were rated much harsher in this area than others. The commands got very low marks for not helping incoming staff officers more with internal coordination issues; staff officers identified that in most cases Joint Directorates are not well defined, constant reorganizations keep moving subject matter experts around and realigning directorate responsibilities, hand offs from predecessors are usually non-existent, supervisors often do not offer guidance, orientation programs are insufficient, and most of their peers are overworked and do not have much time to assist. Staff officers report they are generally on their own in finding the people needed to participate in completing a task.

Some of the coordination issues occur, according to staff officers and senior leaders alike, because there are few direct ways in which to collaborate at the action officer level; the majority of their collaboration appears to be conducted in the following order--e-mail first, followed by research, telephone, with face-to-face discussion only as a last resort. Staff officers also said that "rice-bowl" mentalities and friction among the directorates create barriers for sharing information. One O-4 staff officer described trying to coordinate information to "being in the fight club every day." Staff officers also feel some of these conflicts could be avoided through streamlining the staffing process by reducing the number of people who are involved in each task.

**Competing Priorities:** Another hindrance is competing priorities. Staff officers report that almost every task coming in seems to be "critical" and has a short-fused suspense date. Then as those are being worked, there is a continuous stream of pop-up-taskers whose owners want priority over the other high-priority tasks currently in coordination. Additionally lack of coordination among directorates often leads to redundant tasks being issued, creating double efforts for the staff officer receiving them. In short, staff officers say the volume of taskers coming in exceeds the capacity to manage them in a timely manner and because there are so many competing priorities, they need more guidance from senior leaders about which high priority items actually have the highest priority.

Additionally, most staff officers have collateral duties or additional duties which often take up significant portions of work time. Those who are matrixed to various organizations reported getting conflicting directions from their parent and matrixed organizations, and they must respond to both. Also, staff officers reported that trying to work across the component commands creates conflicts because each has their own commanding general with their own missions, and often very little incentive to work together.

Additionally, during a regular working day, emails, phone calls, and multiple meetings compete for time and take away from staffing package coordination.

**Organizational/Command Issues:** Bureaucracy at a four-star joint command appears to be one of the biggest surprises and most frustrating hurdles to face for staff officers. Very few of those who participated in the discussions and on the survey had prior service in a Combatant Command and had no idea of the layers of organization, types of partnerships, policy and doctrine oversight, legal and governing constraints, and the breadth of knowledge required regarding their parent Service and joint-specific requirements. O-6s and O-5s said that it is very daunting to try to determine where you as an individual fit into the organization and how what you do supports the overall mission of the command. Staff officers cited the following organizational issues affecting work performance:

- Lack of well-defined mission requirements and division of labor within the directorates on command mission;
- Too much reorganization. Major reorganizations may be necessary due to new mission assignments, yet often create upheaval with tasking associated with original command missions; existing staff must be realigned to handle new mission issues, usually causing shifting of subject matter experts and points of contact. Reorganizing every time a new commander arrives creates constant churning of roles and responsibilities, according to study participants;
- Lack of definition of roles and responsibilities of the Joint Directorates and partner agencies within the command creates confusion as to chain of command and information sharing responsibilities and determining who has authority to do what. All commands are not structured alike nor use the same nomenclature or leader rank for their organizational divisions, making it difficult to identify peers and POCs. Within commands, directorate roles and responsibilities are not always well-defined, and often have overlapping responsibilities which can create duplication of effort, competition for high-profile issues, friction among the directorates, and possible avoidance of troublesome or complex issues;
- Inconsistent and/or multiple task management tools, staffing processes, formats, and procedures, which slow down the staffing process;
- Lengthy turn around time for tasks requiring senior level input, sign off. Too many people involved in the process; the higher the level needed for sign off the worse the ratio of people involved;
- Lack of relevant, targeted training for staff officer tasks.

**Technology Issues:** Staff officers are required to use a significant number of software packages and military/joint-specific systems, so they need to be very technically proficient. The main obstacles cited included capacity and band-width issues, incompatible systems, software malfunctions, IT support, length of time to get access to systems, and limitations of collaborative tools. As one staff officer said, “All in all, though, I do think they make things easier in the long run, they just add a lot to the initial learning curve.”

***Insufficient Guidance and Direction:*** In all commands staff officers said they would like to have more guidance and direction from their supervisors and senior leadership. Particularly they are seeking clearer direction upfront when they receive a task, and feedback as to what made a task or briefing successful upon completion. One of the surprises for younger staff officers is that they have to manage their own careers, something most of them have not had to do before. Because it is a joint environment, many of the active duty personnel they work with are from sister Services, so they often have trouble finding the appropriate mentors from their parent Service. In some cases, contractors who are retired military officers serve as advisors; and, although staff officers welcome the support, they pointed out well-intended guidance for training and career education from retirees is sometimes not current.

***Work/Office Environment and Facilities:*** Staff officers generally find the office environment disruptive and distracting to their concentration. During the site visits, daily routines were observed to be very chaotic, more so in some commands than others--constant traffic of people, phones ringing, ad hoc meetings, people stopping by desks to ask questions all add to the fast-paced environment. Physical layout in the commands has an impact on time management, often requiring significant time to go to and from workspaces to attend meetings and back. In USJFCOM, for example, it takes almost two hours roundtrip to go from HQ to the Joint Warfighting Center and J-9. In USSTRATCOM the layers of cyberlock security on the doors a staff officer has to navigate inhibit collaboration and face to face communication. In USCENTCOM and USTRANSCOM significant long-term construction and renovation projects create noise and workspace disruption. In some commands there are more people than workspace; one O-2 reported he has been at his job for over a year and still does not have an assigned desk.

***Geographical and Time Zone Constraints:*** Because staff officers must work with individuals and groups around the world, time zone issues have an impact on the coordination process. Finding the window of opportunity to coordinate with specific individuals takes significant effort. Often the communication links are not reliable so transferring information back and forth across distances to remote locations is difficult.

***Lack of individual knowledge or skills to complete tasks:*** Staff officers cited their own lack of knowledge and the lack of expertise of those they need to interface with as hindrances to getting tasks completed. As one staff officer explained, "The scope of job is very broad, requiring a lot of knowledge in multiple different areas. It is difficult to keep up with staff work while also studying to improve knowledge." Over all the other issues, staff officers and their leaders alike felt that lack of subject matter training was the biggest hurdle they faced. One branch chief pointed out that he was, "Learning as much as the folks working for me. I'm used to being the expert, but here I'm supervising folks who have years of experience in fields that I've never entered (e.g., Planning). It is a

humbling experience, and I am forced to rely on their expertise more than I would like to.”

**No obstacles:** 37 staff officers reported having no obstacles to getting work done.

**Lack of proper security clearances:** Both staff officers and leadership said that when incoming personnel arrive without proper clearances it becomes a serious work issue. Having personnel who cannot access the systems, attend the meetings, or enter buildings and offices within the command creates both an overburden on those who do have the clearances and a workforce management issue for leadership. One leader recommended that security clearances should be prerequisite for Combatant Command assignment.

### 3.10. Workarounds

When personnel bypass standard processes, procedures, core tools, and formal training courses to get their work done, they create “workarounds”—short cuts that help them get a task completed, and from their perspectives, more efficiently. These *ad hoc* approaches sometimes become the *status quo* if others find them useful as well; the original process, procedure, or tool, may remain the official “way,” but is unofficially retired from daily activities. Often formal training programs will teach the formal or official processes and procedures but users follow the work around. As a good workaround takes hold in an organization, personnel then begin to avoid going to a class which teaches the more cumbersome approach to a task.

Sometimes workarounds may be extremely useful within a particular group, but actually create problems in the workflow of other groups within the same organization. In order to achieve greater efficiency in high-volume work environments, personnel often create workarounds that better enable them to manage the workload. Workarounds generally imply there are organizational hindrances to getting the job done. Ineffective or overly complex systems, procedures, or tools which are inefficient to meet work requirements, push employees to develop methods to better handle tasks.

Other workarounds serve as substitutes for the lack of training, or for outdated and/or lengthy training courses. Creating training aids, guide books, and procedural manuals, when done well, can often reduce and sometimes eliminate the need for the amount of time spent in a formal training program.

Workarounds identified in a department, or in an entire organization, indicate a need to review, revise, and/or retire obsolete approaches or tools and to assess the negative and positive impacts a workaround has outside the originating source. A good example is when a technical system is created without end user input in the design phase; if the system is too difficult to use, too time consuming,

or creates more work, users will find ways to not use it, but “work around” it in a more efficient way.

Figure 21 below is a sample of the total list of items staff officers identified they have created to help improve work efficiency in their areas; they range from simple to complex, from paper to web-based:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access based task management tracker</li> <li>• Acetated Watch Officer Reference Sheet</li> <li>• Acronym spreadsheet</li> <li>• Airport code cheat sheet</li> <li>• Automated target folders and EXCEL matrices with relevant hyperlinks</li> <li>• Battle books</li> <li>• Battlestaff binders</li> <li>• Book of essential reading</li> <li>• Checklists</li> <li>• Check lists for daily/weekly products</li> <li>• Collection of CDs with prior products</li> <li>• Continuity binders/Turnover guides</li> <li>• Country Smart Sheets</li> <li>• Country trigraphs</li> <li>• Dashboards to monitor metrics</li> <li>• Data base for FOIA cases</li> <li>• Divisional Training Plan</li> <li>• E-library of format templates, proven examples.</li> <li>• Eliminate needless, antiquated systems</li> <li>• Emergency operation plans for the Directorate</li> <li>• Example staffing packages/slide presentations</li> <li>• Excel macros</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exec officer guidelines</li> <li>• Exercise Planner 101</li> <li>• Extensive peer training</li> <li>• In-coming officer SOP</li> <li>• In-house training guides</li> <li>• Internal archives and templates</li> <li>• Internal training program to teach best practices</li> <li>• Job Qualification Standards</li> <li>• Log books to track actions during exercises</li> <li>• Medical Capabilities SMART book Mission essential, and mission other categories</li> <li>• Mentor program for new and young analysts</li> <li>• Notebook of documents that granted authority and defined the mission</li> <li>• On line AO handbook</li> <li>• Orders and RFF handbook and templates</li> <li>• pdf processing for SSS</li> <li>• Peer created work materials</li> <li>• Planning conferences</li> <li>• Planning SOPs for different missions</li> <li>• Play books</li> <li>• portal with discussion boards</li> <li>• Powerpoint Templates</li> <li>• Release 101" training aid</li> <li>• Quick reference guides for classification</li> <li>• Reference book on J-code interfaces</li> <li>• Reference sites/saved files</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal walk through of organizations and important people</li> <li>• Remedy Ticket templates</li> <li>• Shared Portals</li> <li>• Sharepoint interactive assessment</li> <li>• Smartbooks</li> <li>• Smart books to facilitate Interagency Coordination</li> <li>• SOPs/checklists for each job area</li> <li>• SOP for C4 Planning</li> <li>• SOP's for information sharing during an event</li> <li>• Streamlined the Disaster Response Situational Awareness Group brief</li> <li>• Task spreadsheets</li> <li>• Telephone listings for all pertinent agencies</li> <li>• Temporary LNO positions</li> <li>• TMS attachments, SOP, completion process - Internal TMS tracker - TMS Business Rules -TMS Access Database for closed taskers with comments -Microsoft Outlook in conjunction with TMS</li> <li>• Unofficial handbook</li> <li>• Watch process improvement processes</li> <li>• Web-based Issue Resolution Database</li> <li>• Website that clarifies processes, expectations, entitlements</li> <li>• Welcome reading books</li> <li>• Weekly fusion meetings</li> <li>• Work aids</li> </ul>
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**Figure 21: Workarounds created by Joint Staff Officers**

Workarounds are an example of personnel trying to better systems. The joint staff officers in the discussion and survey responses indicated they have and are willing to put significant time and effort into process improvements.



## Section 4: Training, Education, and Experience

This section of the report focuses on the relevant training, education, and experience of joint staff officers prior to reporting to a Combatant Command assignment, and the training provided by the commands after arrival.

When asked to identify any prior training, education or experience which had helped prepare them for staff officer work, most of the group participants reported they had very little relevant joint training, PME (professional Military Education), or joint experience. Those who had prior staff experience within their Services said they had a general understanding of what was expected, but had virtually nothing to prepare them for the content of the job, the need to package everything in a strategic focus, or the volume of work required in a 4-star Combatant Command. The 59 officers who had worked for the Joint Chiefs of Staff indicated they needed very little ramp up time, and that their start-up time was focused on primarily learning command-specific information and locating appropriate points of contact for the areas they were assigned; these officers ranked prior joint staff work at a 4.0 on a scale of 1 to 5 for relevance, with 5 the highest.

Staff officers and senior leaders were adamant in believing that personnel should not be sent to a Combatant Command assignment without, at minimum, their Intermediate Level Education (ILE), since one of the areas of expertise a staff officer is supposed to bring to the job is knowledge of his or her Service. Without the ILE program experience a staff officer lacks some of the deeper understanding of the capabilities, tools, processes, and culture of his or her respective Service. Officers and senior leaders also felt JPME II (or some version of it) should be part of mandatory preparation—regardless of rank of incoming personnel—immediately prior to or en route to a Combatant Command assignment. Assessments from those who had attended JPME II were equally divided; one third said the course was extremely helpful, one third said that some parts were helpful, and one third said it was little or no help at all. Those who had attended in residence said the best parts were interacting with personnel from the other Services and the Combatant Command-focused working groups. JPME will be discussed in more detail later in this section.

### 4.1. Training and Education Programs Attended

Respondents were asked to identify their career educational, training, and experiential backgrounds; as well they were asked to rate each program with regard to helpfulness in preparing for their current staff officer work on a scale of 1 to 5 (with 5 being excellent) for effectiveness and relevance to their current jobs. Each Combatant Command was provided a detailed listing of all the courses staff officers listed and rated, but for this report a summary is provided.

The highest ranked programs and experience were prior Joint Staff officer positions and AJPME, which were rated by 59 and 19 people respectively at 4.0 for relevance to current job. Previous staff officer billets and content-specific courses (directly-related to a primary or secondary field of military specialty) were each rated at 3.6 (by 250 officers for content-specific course and 595 who had prior Service staff officer billets). JPME II was rated by 309 officers at 2.7 level of effectiveness, and 194 personnel rated their senior PME/JPME II War College at 2.8. The programs ranked lowest with regard to helpfulness for staff officer work were civilian university and service academy educations—at 2.15 and 2.45 respectively—programs where analytical skills as well as research and writing skills should have been developed.

Staff officers identified a few modules or sections within larger courses or programs that focused on joint information, but few had any targeted training with much detail or depth on the types of joint knowledge needed to perform joint staff officer tasks. Figure 22 below gives the complete breakdown of the training and education courses by category with average effectiveness ratings provided by joint staff officers:

<i>Institution/Experience</i>	<i>Number of respondents</i>	<i>Average Effectiveness Rating: 0=No Help; 3=moderately helpful; 5=exceptional</i>
AJPME	19	4.0
Civilian University	1005	2.15
Content Specific Training/Other	250	3.6
ILE/JPME I	959	3.2
Joint Staff, Pentagon	59	4.05
JPME II (10 or 12 week course)	309	2.7
Previous staff officer billet	595	3.6
Senior PME/JPME II (War College equivalent)	194	2.8
Service Academy	291	2.45
Service Command (squad, wing, unit, company, battalion level command)	274	3.0

*Figure 22: Joint Staff Officer Ratings for Prior Education, Training, and Experience*

## 4.2. JPME

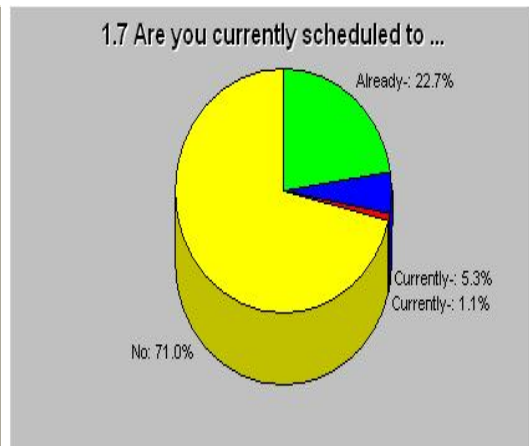
JPME completion was an important topic, with both staff officers and senior leaders strongly supporting the idea that staff officers need to attend JPME II prior to reporting to a Combatant Command. Senior Leaders suggested that attending the program should be looked at as part of the PCS (permanent change of station) requirement. Very few of the staff officers in Phases One or Two of this study had attended JPME II either prior to arriving at the command or during their tours. Across the commands all agreed that for staff officers to attend JPME II upon leaving a Combatant Command assignment makes the

course irrelevant for usefulness to the command and to the staff officer who needed the content knowledge *while* in his assignment, not *after*. Attending after the fact, according to site discussion and survey participants, only represents a tick mark for fulfilling requirements to become a joint qualified officer, and takes up slots in the program which could be filled by in-bound new staff officers.

Senior leaders and staff officers recommend the joint staff should do whatever is needed to make JPME II available to more staff officers, whether it is creating mobile training teams, making some coursework available on-line, or increasing the number of slots per iteration. When asked why they felt JPME II was the solution, senior leaders and staff officers alike said it was the only course they were aware of that was designed to provide **joint knowledge**. JPME, however, was not designed specifically to create competent joint **staff officers**, so only some of the curriculum focuses on the joint knowledge helpful in the job. Those who had not attended the course strongly asserted that, in their opinions, the course would have made a significant positive difference in their capabilities to handle the job; but those who had attended said only some of the curriculum was helpful and rated the short and long courses at 2.7 and 2.8, on a scale of 5 for relevance to the job. Those who attended upon leaving a command felt they should be given extra credit because they ended up serving as their Combatant Command's subject matter expert in the course. Special Operations personnel shared concern that those teaching JPME II do not have qualified SOF personnel teaching in the SOF content-related areas.

Of concern to the commands is that a very small percentage of those arriving for duty who were eligible to attend JPME II had actually attended; it is difficult, says the command, to send people during tour as the commands are already understaffed and the volume of work is high; they would prefer a delay in an officer's arrival in most cases if he or she were able to attend a JPME II program. Figures 23 through 26 give a breakdown of JPME II attendance by total population, grade, service, and command. The 302 officers who said they have already completed the course include those who have attended during their current Combatant Command assignment.

JPME II Attendance Across All Combatant Commands	#	%
Already Completed	302	22.7%
Currently Scheduled	70	5.3%
Currently Scheduled Upon Leaving	14	1.1%
No	943	71.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1329</b>	<b>100%</b>
(N/A)	99	



**Figure 23: Composite JPME Attendance and Scheduling**

By grade, the data breaks down as follows in Figure 24, with a higher percentage of O-5s and O-4s scheduled to attend during their tour than O-6s:

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Already Completed # &amp; % of respondents</b>	<b>Scheduled to Attend</b>	<b>Scheduled Upon Departure</b>	<b>Not Scheduled to Attend</b>	<b>No Answer*</b>
<b>O-6s</b> (88 respondents)	34 (38.6%)	3 (3.4%)	2 (2.3)	49 (55.7%)	16
<b>O-5s</b> (506 respondents)	162 (32%)	22 (4.3%)	6 (1.2%)	316 (62.5%)	42
<b>O4s</b> (526 respondents)	99 (18.8%)	44 (8.4%)	6 (1.1%)	377 (71.7%)	31
<b>O3s **</b> (31 respondents)	1 (0.6%)	1 (0.6%)	0	167 (98.8%)	7

**Figure 24: JPME II Attendance by Grade** (\*No Answer includes some O-3s who are not eligible to attend. \*\*O-3s are not usually eligible to attend; the O-3s who have attended and are scheduled to attend are prior enlisted with active duty and reserve time)

By Service, the Navy and Marine Corps have the lowest percentages of attendance prior to serving in a Combatant Command. The comparison across Services in Figure 25 is:

	<b>Air Force Respondents: 492</b>	<b>Army Respondents: 31</b>	<b>Marine Corps Respondents: 12</b>	<b>Navy Respondents: 84</b>
Already Completed	125 (25.4%)	107 (31.7%)	12 (13.5%)	58 (14.5%)
Scheduled to Attend during tour	31 (6.3%)	20 (5.9%)	9 (10%)	10 (2.5%)
Scheduled to attend upon leaving	3 (0.6%)	4 (1.2%)	3 (3.4%)	3 (0.8%)
Not scheduled to attend	333 (67.7%)	207 (61.2%)	65 (73%)	329 (82.3%)
<b>TOTALS</b>	492 (100%)	338 (100%)	89 (100%)	400%
No Answer	48	28	2	20

**Figure 25: JPME II Attendance by Service** (Note: The six Coast Guard personnel who took the survey are not included as the Coast Guard does not attend the JPME programs)

By command (Figure 26), currently USNORTHCOM has the lowest percentage of staff officers who have already attended JPME II and USJFCOM has the highest percentage. USEUCOM has the lowest percentage of officers scheduled to attend during their current assignment:

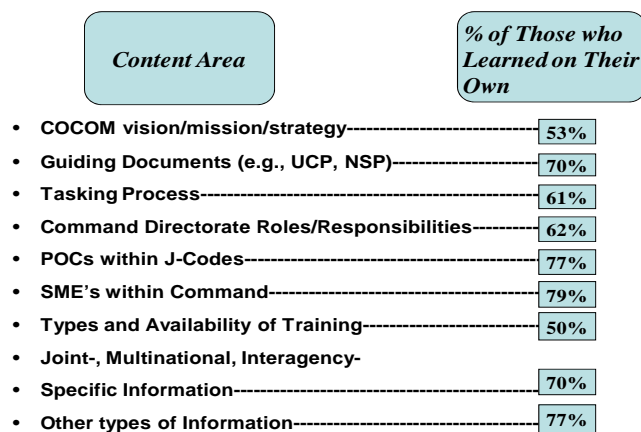
	EUCOM	JFCOM	N/NC	PACOM	SOCOM	SOUTH-COM	STRAT-COM	TRANS-COM
Already Completed	15 (22.1%)	23 (31.9%)	42 (18.5%)	57 (22.7%)	12 (20.3%)	34 (20.7%)	61 (24.7%)	41 (21.4%)
Scheduled to Attend during tour	1 (1.5%)	4 (5.6%)	13 (5.7%)	15 (6.0%)	5 (8.5%)	4 (2.4%)	12 (4.9%)	14 (7.3%)
Scheduled to attend upon leaving	1 (1.5%)	1 (1.4%)	3 (1.3%)	3 (1.2%)	0	2 (1.2%)	2 (0.8%)	2 (1.0%)
Not scheduled to attend	51 (75%)	44 (61.1%)	169 (74.4%)	176 (70.1%)	42 (71.2%)	124 (75.6%)	172 (69.6%)	135 (70.3%)
<b>TOTALS</b>	68 (100%)	72 (100%)	227 (100%)	251 (100%)	59 (100%)	164 (100%)	247 (100%)	192 (100%)
No Answer	5	4	15	19	4	19	16	11

**Figure 26: JPME II Attendance by Combatant Command**

Of the 1,428 headquarters staff survey respondents, only 22.7% have attended JPME II, the program senior leader and staff officer participants consistently cited as the primary course, in their opinions, for teaching joint knowledge, and one they feel should be required, regardless of grade, prior to a combatant command assignment.

### 4.3. Training Provided by the Combatant Command

Staff officers were asked how they learned information needed for the job once they were working in their command. Significantly, in every category (Figure 27) a large percentage of staff officers said they learn almost every aspect of their job on their own initiatives whether it is by self-conducted research, from peers, from leaders, from contractors or a combination.



**Figure 27: Categories Where Staff Officers Say They Learned on their Own**

All the commands have an entry course that staff officers called an indoctrination/ orientation course. Although this is generally a mandatory course in each command it appears that many people do not go. The primary reasons given for non-attendance were: “the class was full,” “the class was cancelled,” “could not get released from work,” or “was told the course was not relevant.” For those who were delayed getting to the class, by the time they were able to get scheduled they usually had already in-processed, learned as best they could on the job, and felt like the training was not going to be very helpful to them at that point.

Survey respondents were asked to identify and rate the availability of command-provided training related to the types of tasks they are required to perform; they were asked to rate each course for effectiveness on a 1 to 5 scale, with 5 being highly effective. The following provides an overview of available courses identified by survey respondents; methods of delivery used; and staff officer ratings.

***In-Coming Orientation:*** Approximately 93% of survey respondents said that incoming orientation was available to them; less than 3% said that the course they were scheduled for was cancelled or that they could not be released from work. Over 72% of the 1,132 staff officers who rated this course gave it a 3 or better indicating this is a generally helpful course. Over 91% took the course in the classroom, with 8% taking it on line, and .5% by correspondence. From the anecdotal data, even with the best ratings, staff officers indicated that although orientations are helpful they should be just the beginning; staff officers would like more task-focused training, spaced intermittently within the first few months of arrival. The term “orientation” is loosely aligned as some commands use the orientation class for in-processing, housing assignment, etc. Other commands have classes designed as heavily focused on identifying command-specific missions, roles and responsibilities, which staff officers said was helpful. Rarely, though, do the orientations include basic joint knowledge (JS organization and structure, government budgeting processes, roles and missions of the other Combatant Commands) that staff officers need for their jobs.

***Task Management Process Training:*** Staff officers were asked if they had access to and had attended a course designed to train individual command processes for managing tasks. For the most part, those officers who said they have had training said it was part of orientation; there appears to be minimal hands-on or project-based training available which teaches how a staffing package gets worked through the system. This is an important part of a staff officer’s job and they feel more training focused on the process, taught in conjunction with the on-line systems they use would make them more productive sooner in their assignment. One command, USEUCOM, does have an action officer course which is taught early in the tour which includes the process and the system; however, staff officers say that the course is too long with too much information too soon in the tour and they recommend shorter parts of the course be taught over several months. This information is taught mostly by PowerPoint and lecture format. Those who rated the course gave it an average of 2.8

indicating the course is slightly below average and should be reviewed for updating and revising.

***Task Management Automated System Training:*** The average score for this training, taken by 753 officers was 2.7, indicating it is below average and should be reviewed for relevance and accuracy. Of the 1,099 who answered the question, over 25% said this training was not available to them. Over 51% took this course in a classroom, while 47% took it on line. The automated tasker systems, even though different across the commands, all received heavy criticism for not being user-friendly or self-intuitive, and for being cumbersome to work with; staff officers said that more detailed training would probably help them to better utilize the systems. However, staff officers in all commands felt a better option is for the Joint Staff to select and implement a standard automated system for the Joint Staff and all the commands.

***Training for Action Officer/Staff Officer Toolkits:*** Of the 1110 officers who responded to this question, over 21% said there was no training or toolkits available to them. Almost 56% say they took this training or use the toolkits on-line, and 41% received their information in the classroom. This course was rated by 791 personnel, who were equally divided: 33% thought their course was ineffective; 33% thought the course was moderately effective, and 33% thought it was highly effective. The rating for this type of command-sponsored training was 2.9 and was consistent across all commands.

***Additional Training:*** Most of the staff officers have spent significant amounts of time in formal training and education programs in their careers; additionally many of them have used personal time to take courses to better prepare themselves for their jobs. When asked to identify courses taken on their personal time, staff officers listed everything from master degrees to complex job-specific courses. Guard and Reserve officers appear to be the population taking more courses on-line or by correspondence to better themselves because they are very restricted by policy in what formal courses they can attend. Staff officers said the volume and pace of work at a Combatant Command left them little to no time to take courses on their own time. Staff officers, however, did suggest that if training and training aids had been available to them in advance they would have taken advantage of them during PCS intervals prior to arriving at a command; they think future staff officers would definitely be interested in access to any preparation information whether in a classroom, a handbook, on-line or on a CD-ROM.

#### **4.4. Level of Difficulty in Getting Approval to Attend Training**

Staff officers were asked how difficult it was for them to get permission and time from work to attend training or education *prior to arrival* at their Combatant Commands. The majority of responses related to requests for JPME attendance.

Of 1,372 respondents, almost 23% said it was impossible. An additional 21% said it was difficult but possible. Some personnel also indicated that they did not know to ask, and that no joint learning opportunities—neither training nor educational—were offered. The reasons most cited for difficulty in attending training were that op tempos of previous assignments made it impossible to leave to attend school, no billets were available for school, and funding was an issue. By grade, O5-s, O-4s, and O-3s ranged from 26% down to 23% who said it was impossible to get permission. Of the Services, the Marine Corps had the highest number of personnel at 25% of survey respondents who said it was impossible to get approval; although Air Force said they had the least difficult time getting approval, 20% of Air Force personnel still said it was impossible.

Next, staff officers were asked how difficult it is to get approval and time off work to attend training and education needed for the job now that they are in the command. Slightly more than 21% of the respondents have never asked for permission to attend training, and 3% think there is no staff officer-oriented training available to ask for. Only 7.2% said it was impossible. Overall, staff officers recognized their respective command's commitment to training, and said their supervisors were generally supportive of attendance in training which was mission related. The biggest obstacle to attending training is the workload and time constraints; staff officers also reported feeling guilty asking to go to training when offices were understaffed and op tempo was high. Because the work volume is heavy and the pace fast, staff officers say that having focused staff officer training early in the assignment with incremental follow-up sessions and good training aids is important—the longer one is engaged in the assignment the more difficult it becomes to break away to attend classes. An additional hurdle in getting permission to attend training is travel costs; it is particularly difficult to get permission for courses which require TDY costs; for those in USPACOM and USEUCOM to attend training in the continental US, it is even more difficult because of air fare as well as length of travel time. Staff officers also pointed out the longer the course the more difficult to get permission to attend; with offices understaffed, having one person gone to attend a class (such as the 10 or 12 week JPME II) takes a valuable resource away from the office and also blocks others who need to attend go TDY or attend training until he or she returns.

#### **4.5. Preferred Learning Styles**

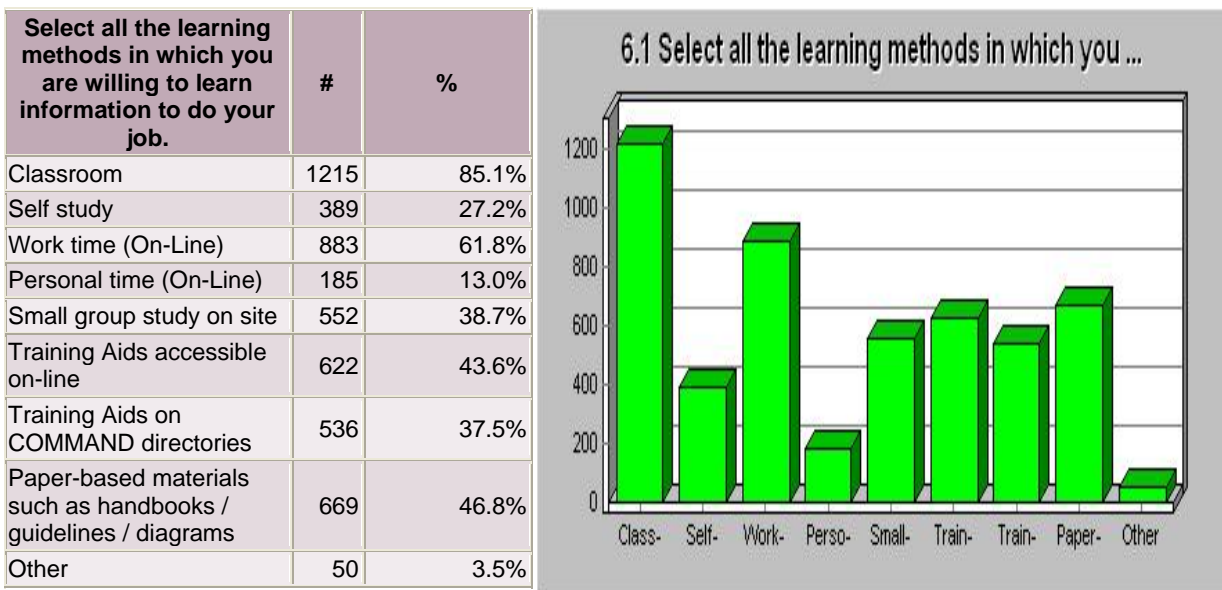
One of the consistent requests from staff officers during the discussions in Phase One was to have more delivery options for professional training and education to accommodate a variety of learning styles and a time-crunched work environment. When asked to identify all the learning methods through which they are willing to learn information needed for their work, 85% of the 1,428 survey respondents selected the classroom as their first choice because it allowed them uninterrupted, focused time and provided what they felt was valuable interaction with instructors, subject matter experts, and peers. A very large proportion of staff officers in their anecdotal comments said this was their preferred style



because they like being able to interact with peers and build their point of contact networks, but also like having a knowledgeable instructor who can answer questions on the spot.

The second choice was on-line learning with the caveat that it be during work time. The primary concern, however, for on-line work at the desk is the inability to focus and concentrate due to office noise and constant interruptions. The site visits allowed an opportunity to view some of the work environment; based on those limited visits, the constant activity observed within and around an individual’s workspace would be extremely prohibitive to focusing and concentrating on an on-line course. Telephones, constant people traffic and daily office discussion and noise create significant interruptions and distractions; staff officers also said if they were sitting at their desks, they were fair game for peers and anyone coming in the office who was working staffing packages or other actions. If possible, establishing learning kiosks—a room or a place where individuals could be assured of a quieter, less disruptive work environment—could provide a more stable learning atmosphere.

The chart in Figure 28 provides a breakdown of the learning method preferences; there was no discernable difference in preference by rank. Younger officers, who are usually technically “savvy” were as eager to have classroom based instruction as those in higher ranks for the same reason—preference for face to face interaction with others. In every category reviewed—by command, by grade, by Service--classroom was the top choice by a large margin.



**Figure 28: Preferred Learning Methods**

## Section 5: Organizational Issues Affecting Staff Officer Performance

The data from Phases One and Two of the study identify a significant gap in the expectations of the proficiency level of what senior leaders expect from joint staff officers and what staff officers are able to produce upon arrival in the commands. The commands have a high number of personnel who have had little to no prior joint background:

- Of the 3,968 authorized billets, **49.3%** are in grades O-4 and below, officers who have not had the depth of Service experience, nor the joint-specific training and professional military education needed to have the knowledge, skills, and proficiency levels required to work in a 4-star strategic environment;
- **67.7%** of the 1,428 survey respondents are in their first joint assignments. The survey respondents represent approximately 36% of the authorized billet population, and represent a very good distribution by grade, Service, directorate; so this translates to almost 70% of the Combatant Commands HQ staffs are in their first joint assignment;
- Only **22.7%** of survey respondents have attended the JPME II course, perceived by study participants as the primary program for teaching joint knowledge;
- The learning curve is on average **seven** months or more, and staff officers say they learn the majority of skills and knowledge from peers and contractors, instead of in the classroom or on-line. Although some skills are best learned through on-the-job-training, too much of it lengthens the ramp up time, and widens the risk of workarounds being taught, and incorrect information being passed on. In addition when peers have to be teachers on the job they are not working at full capacity, so the more staff officers who arrived untrained for the job, the more time co-workers must provide assistance and the longer the learning curves.

### 5.1. Organizational Issues Affecting Staff Officer Performance

The data indicates that although there is significant need for training in the knowledge, skills, and abilities required for staff officer work, some of the improvements that each individual command can make will also help reduce the lengthy learning curves and increase productivity and proficiency.

Study participants identified specific obstacles to getting work done, many of which are issues not related to training solutions. Participants were asked for suggestions which they felt would help improve their work performance.

Comments have been divided into three categories:

- (1) Improvements which can be made by the Joint Staff, DOD, and the Services
- (2) Improvements which can be made by the individual Combatant Command leadership,
- (3) Improvements which can be made by the individual directorates within the combatant command.

Across all of the Combatant Commands, staff officers and leaders say that the standardization of tools, templates, and processes for managing staff packages would be of immense help in reducing redundancies, eliminating conflicting processes, and streamlining the process from the Joint Staff down. Staff officers feel the current JSAP system the Joint Staff currently uses is a much better electronic tasking system with more capability and would make an excellent replacement for the multiple systems currently in use across the commands.

### 5.1.1 Staff Officer Recommendations to the Joint Staff and OSD

Staff officers and senior leaders identified ways the Joint Staff and Department of Defense can make improvements to the tasking process, tools, products or relevant training for individual performance improvement. Participants in the discussion groups and the survey responses provided the following recommendations for Joint Staff contributions to improving the overall staffing process and providing joint officers with the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed (Numbers following a comment indicate the amount of times it was mentioned):

- ***Make lead time for review of taskers relevant to their length:*** Taskers often reach a staff officer's desk with little or no time remaining to meet the suspense; dates for review need to be realistic, both in allowing for time for dissemination within the command, as well as allowing an appropriate amount of time for the length of the task or the document to be reviewed.
- ***Make an effort to reduce last minute taskings and to coordinate duplicate staffing packages***
- ***Process/ Administrative Changes:*** reduce the number of coordination sheets; better identify which directorates need to respond; improve the context of taskings—better clarify the instructions, the purpose, the objective, the timeline, and the required action; pass all taskings through the COCOM HQs and not to subordinate COCOM organizations; enforce existing policies.
- ***JPME I, JPME II, and AJPME Course Improvement:*** Create alternative methods to the classroom version of JPME II; make JPME Phase I and

II mandatory for assignment prior to check-in at a new command, regardless of rank; expand the quotas of student seats; review the existing courses for relevance. From a content perspective, those staff officers who have attended JPME II feel that it needs revision for currency. Throughout all the site visits and the survey responses, staff officers and senior leaders consistently appear to see JPME I and II as the primary venues for developing joint staff officer skills and knowledge. However, the purpose of JPME is to contribute to the development of joint qualified officers, and was not designed to specifically teach joint staff officer skills.

- **Improve Training/Training Aids:** Staff officers consistently report they believe joint training should begin earlier in a Service career; for the short-term they recommend a required training class on joint staff processes and relevant joint knowledge before starting assignment. Additionally they say training is needed for the current joint tools (JOPES, IWS, etc.). Study participants offered a number of suggestions for types of courses and for methods of delivery. Additionally, they requested a single source (website) that has documents like NSS, NMS, NDS, UCP, DoD priorities, publications, etc., and other training aids such as acronym/definition list, current organizational charts, links to other agency sites, and examples of work products which would be helpful to them.
- **A Single, Standardized Tasking Management System:** Staff officers and senior leaders agreed that there should be a single, standardized tasking system for all of DOD, because currently tasking occurs through a multitude of systems, to include message systems, e-mail, and collaborative environments—which makes it difficult to know what is considered official tasking. Staff officers recommended a system based on MS Outlook since this is already a standard tool and it contains a tasking function which is easily adaptable. They also requested a concise reference document that outlines the joint tasking process, a universal up to date handbook (like the Purple Book) and CD- ROM with user friendly references and examples, and a JSO toolbox with step-by-step guides to the basic staff process would be helpful.
- **Joint Tools/Systems:** Staff officers requested fewer joint tools and perhaps the retiring of some of the least effective, least used systems. Currently, in their opinions there are too many to learn, many of which are overlapping or redundant. Staff officers report that the training for joint systems is either non-existent or insufficient for good learning transfer.

### 5.1.2. Staff Officer Recommendations to the Services

Both discussion group participants and survey respondents feel the Service components can also help to better prepare officers to serve in a Combatant

Command assignment. Staff officers provided the following recommendations for their Services:

- **Assignment Recommendations:** Staff officers request that the Services make a more concerted effort to assign personnel to billets commensurate with experience level and needed skill sets. Once assigned, both the Services and the Joint Staff need to assure officers the opportunity to acquire any needed training prior to arrival. Staff officers also request that more opportunities to serve in joint assignments prior to Field Grade Officer be made available. Staff officers and senior leaders both think that the standard 2 to 3 year assignments need to have an optional one year extension to make best use of joint staff officers newly gained skills.
- **JPME Recommendations:** This was a topic of significant interest and concern for both senior leaders and staff officers. Almost to an individual, the study participants said that JPME II, or some modified version of it should be made available to anyone assigned to a Combatant Command, regardless of rank, and that it should be attended en route, not during the assignment, nor upon leaving the assignment. Even in the current system, staff officers and leaders say there are insufficient available billets and funding to meet the needs. Often more junior officers on their way to a command get bumped by the more senior officers who attend upon leaving a command, or by O-6s who must have the course for JSO career qualification. Additionally, study participants recommended increased efforts on getting more junior officers to JPME I; senior leaders collectively agreed that no one should be serving at a Combatant Command who had not had, at a minimum, ILE. For those O-1s and O-2s currently serving in the commands who are not eligible to attend these courses, any joint information, they say, would be helpful.

Staff officers often reported significant frustration with their Services concerning the selection and approval process for attending JPME courses. In some cases, staff officers did not even know that JPME was an option for them; others said their Services would not fund the program; and yet another group could not get released from their jobs to attend. Staff officers recommend that those being assigned to a Combatant Command should get priority for course billets.

- **Services Need to Provide More Joint Knowledge and Opportunities Earlier in Career:** Staff officers suggested the Services include joint officer topic areas in the Service schools and training venues from the beginning of a career, including highlighting the Service-specific contributions to the joint and global environments. This early awareness and incremental emphasis at progressive stages in the career would be beneficial even if never serving in a joint assignment, say staff officers. Additionally, they recommend that more opportunities for exchange

programs, fellowships, and joint assignments be made early in the career track as a spiral development approach to jointness.

- ***Guard and Reserve Training:*** Guard members and reservists have a difficult time gaining access to joint training as they are restricted with regard to what they can attend. Many of those who took the survey reported spending a significant amount of time taking courses on their own time, in an already crowded work week because they need the knowledge to do the job. Reservists and Guard personnel recommended that the regular JPME program, rather than the AJPME which they can attend, be opened to them so they would have the opportunity to meet and study with others going to Combatant Command assignments.

### **5.1.3. Recommendations for Combatant Command Improvements**

Staff officers provided a number of recommendations in areas where the commands and directorates can make improvements to help reduce the lengthy learning curve for joint staff officers. Because those recommendations are very command-specific the summary here will be focused on the general recommendations that could apply to all; the commands each have been provided the itemized recommendations from their own staff officers.

- ***Administrative/Procedural Recommendations:*** Staff officers' number one request in this category is for the commands to simplify the complexity of the staffing process. Actions such as standardizing formats and tasking practices across directorates, enforcing the standards, encouraging people to more openly share information rather than hoard it, fostering collaborative processes, providing up front clear guidance to task objective, and providing more targeted staff officer training and relevant training aids while on the job would help significantly. One of the most important actions, say staff officers, that would bring the biggest return on investment for the commands is to focus more closely on ways to accurately assign tasks; staff officers say that tasks often assigned to the wrong directorates often turn into tremendous work problems, but that the systems do not allow for returning or forwarding misallocated tasks to the proper group.

***Training:*** Staff officers say there is not enough of the right training available for joint staff officers either before reporting to duty or once on site. Although staff officers do recognize that the commands have made some significant efforts to provide information, it is not always easy to find, nor easy to access. Personnel also reported that due to the combatant commands being understaffed, and key personnel constantly on travel or leave (which requires them to take on additional back-up work), it is difficult for staff officers to take any significant time off to attend a course; training solutions, they recommend need to be in short, intense, targeted, approaches.

- If relevant training is available outside of the command, getting funding and permission make it even more difficult, as funding is tight, and travel means extra time away from the job. Even though most of the commands have mandatory orientation courses, many staff officers report not attending due to work conflicts, the course being rescheduled, or even cancelled. Staff officers feel that opportunities to attend either training or education programs (such as JPME) or to have access to training aids (acronym lists, command organizational information, etc.) prior to or en route, followed by mandatory incremental training focused specifically on staff officer tasking would significantly reduce the learning curve. Staff officers said two fundamental things need to happen first; the basic, necessary training needs to be made available and leadership needs to lead the way in insisting that personnel receive some preliminary training before starting a job.
- **Reorganization/Manpower/Staffing:** A staff officer in one command said that reorganization in his command was like the “never Ending Story; we never get one totally implemented before another one begins, so that not being in the middle of a reorganization would seem strange.” Although this was an extreme case, the other commands also have been through some significant reorganization in the last few years, to the extent that it is almost impossible to keep daily accurate information such as phone trees and organizational charts. Not all of the commands are organized the same, and even those who use the standard J-code nomenclature do not use them in the same way—J-7 means one thing in one command and does not even exist in another, for example. The differing organizational structures add to the coordination difficulties in finding the right people with the right information to assist in taskers.

The commands say they are understaffed in number of people assigned, and some commands appear to have a higher percentage of officers assigned to a billet designated for a higher rank, which gives the command a larger overall experience deficit. The volume of work is extremely high; personnel work long hours. Staff officers request that leadership give them better guidance for prioritization of tasks, so they can meet critical needs first. On any given day taskers come in from multiple directions; add to this what staff officers call “pop-up” taskers, and just trying to determine which high priority is really the highest takes a significant amount of effort.

- **Guidance/Direction/Leadership:** This was another area of discussion consistent across the commands and across the directorates within each. Staff officers generally say they need and want more direction, particularly in the first year of the job. Also they want mentoring and better sponsorship. From both the discussion groups and survey responses, staff officers are looking for the kind of support they were used to in their parent Services. In one of the group discussions an O-5 said that one of

the biggest surprises to him was that he was on his own when it came to career decisions, and that he had minimal sponsorship in getting himself and his family settled in; these thoughts were echoed in every site visit. It still matters how people are greeted and assimilated into their new jobs, perhaps more so, say staff officers, when you arrive and find that the military may be in the minority in the workforce.

Staff officers reported relying heavily on peers and contractors for guidance and for finding information needed to do their work. A significant number of staff officers reported frustration in watching government civilians and contractors walk out the door at 1600 with critical work still to be addressed; many staff officers admitted to knowing little about contract and government civilian employee regulations governing work requirements as this is the first time they have worked in a joint environment and the first time in many cases for working with civilian and contractor personnel.

A third request from staff officers to senior leaders is to make training a priority. Although many staff officers had praise for their direct supervisors, they want the command as a whole to support pushing for help from OSD, the Joint Staff, and the Services for more joint staff officer-relevant training. How commands allocate funding for training varies by command, but there appears to be few funds dedicated to the support of developmental training, particularly fundamental skills which senior leaders think should be taught before arrival and should be inherent in Service career development programs.

- **JPME:** The single most requested concern about JPME is for the commands to insist in ensuring JPME attendance before or soon upon arrival. Staff officers think the commands could help push for mobile JPME teams to provide on-site delivery as an alternative. JS J-7 JEDD reports that JPME Legislative authority/relief for in-resident requirements for JPME II to be hosted at COCOM HQs is in progress.
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- **Technology Improvements:** The primary request from staff officers concerning technology is to use the best technologies to the greatest capacities; staff officers say currently there are too many, often overlapping and conflicting. As a whole, the staff officers who participated in this study are technically very proficient and are in many cases used to having better technologies in their homes than in their offices. They want the technologies to work when they need them. They want the bandwidth needed to manage tasks, so maintenance and integration issues are always at the forefront of technology concerns. Staff officers want the commands to assist in helping solve the technical restrictions and conflicts for using both the SIPRNET and the NIPRNET (some software packages cannot be used and some websites for research cannot be accessed.) and resolving the complications and issues surrounding the electronic task



management systems.

- **Command-specific Training Recommendations:** When asked, in what ways the command can best provide relevant training and access to knowledge, staff officers consistently asked for more classes, information, and training aids via Joint Knowledge Online, the command portals, and via the classroom. They want more training available to them through a variety of optional delivery methods, accessible as they need it. Their recommendations concerning command-sponsored training include: make information available prior to arriving; make sure the command orientation includes a section specifically focused on staff procedures and critical command information for coordination, and hands on training for joint systems and tasking management systems required for the job. Also, staff officers would like to see a series of “lessons” provided within the first 6 months specifically for action officers/staff officers. They would like to see training information easier to find and training programs readily accessible whether they are classroom-based or on-line. Staff officers in general prefer the classroom because it gives them a chance to network, learn more about the command and have specific questions answered by the instructor, but they also use a variety of other methods such as on-line and peers as sources for finding needed information.

#### **5.1.4 Recommendations for Combatant Command Directorate Improvements**

For recommendations to the directorates, staff officers say there are a number of areas where improvements affecting performance can be made.

- **Tasking Process:** The primary requests in this category are for prioritization of tasks, pushing back on those tasks that really do not belong within specific directorates but were wrongly assigned, better coordination among directorates with regard to task ownership, and enforcement of templates and standard processes. Additionally staff officers would like to see efforts made to get people to more willingly share information, as well as better tailoring of tasks to reduce the number of people required in the coordination process.
- **Personnel/Workload:** Many of the commands are severely undermanned; also with two wars in progress the churning of personnel is at a high rate. The volume of work has increased because many of the commands have received new and/or additional missions within the last five years. Staff officers understand that it is probably impossible to get full staffing, but they do think that better allocation of personnel to tasks, better prioritization, and more guidance and directions can help. Additionally any departmental relevant staff officer training will also help improve proficiency.

- **Leadership/Guidance/Direction:** Staff officers look to their own directorates to help them understand how the branches within their own organization function as well as gaining an understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the other directorates within the command. They also say they would like more direct feedback from senior leaders as to what staff officers have done right or wrong with a particular staffing package; staff officers say they would rather have negative feedback than none at all, because the feedback serves as a lesson on how to manage a similar task the next time. Another common issue across the commands is that staff officers say there are too many meetings and the directorates should coordinate better to help reduce duplicative or unnecessary ones.

Staff officers also say they would like more career counseling and guidance, as well as day to day mentoring from their senior leaders. One staff officer pointed out, "Every day in my unit in my previous assignment I new how I was doing on any given day; here, you may never know how you are doing---some of the tasks are two years in progress and will still be in process when I leave. I have no idea where I have bettered a task's status or harmed it."

- **Training:** It is at the directorate level where the majority of the workarounds have been created by staff officers to improve daily work efficiencies. Surprisingly during the site visits a number of the directorates had developed training courses on their own because the broader command sponsored training either did not exist or was not meeting the needs. In some cases the directorate sponsored training was or had supplanted the official command-sponsored training or training aids. The primary requests at the directorate level are for training aids that identify templates, examples of work products, and directories of information.

## Section 6: Leadership Responses

### 6.1. Leadership Profile Data Summary

During the site visit over 50 Division Chiefs, SES (Senior Executive Service) leaders, and General/Flag officers from all Services and from the active and reserve components participated through discussion meetings. For the survey, 137 senior leaders provided input; profiles of survey respondents are provided in Figure 29 below. The representation across grades, services, directorates, and components and time in grade—in both the site visits and the survey respondents—provides an excellent cross section of leaders to assess current and past staff officer performance.

Grade	#	%	Service	Component	#	%	Directorate	#	%	Months in Current Billet	%
O-10	1	0.7%	Air Force	Active	41	29.9%	HQ Other	22	16.1%	1 - 3	12
O-9	2	1.5%	Air Force	Reserve	8	5.8%	J-1	8	5.8%	3 - 6	36
O-8	7	5.1%	Army	Active	22	16.1%	J-2	15	10.9%	6 - 9	7
O-7	7	5.1%	Army	National Guard	5	3.6%	J-3	40	29.2%	9 - 12	7
O-6	78	56.9%	Army	Reserve	6	4.4%	J-4	3	2.2%	13 - 24	36
O-5	24	17.5%	Coast Guard	Active	2	1.5%	J-5	11	8.0%	24 - 36	24
SES-3	1	0.7%	Marine Corps	Active	7	5.1%	J-6	5	3.6%	More than 36	15
SES-2	1	0.7%	Navy	Active	29	21.2%	J-7	5	3.6%		
SES-1	1	0.7%	Navy	Reserve	11	8.0%	J-8	4	2.9%		
			Other	Active	6	4.4%	J-9	6	4.4%		
Other	15	10.9%					Other	18	13.1%		
Total	137	100	Total		137	100%	Total	137	100%	Total	137

**Figure 29: Leadership Demographics**

### 6.2. Areas for Staff Officer Improvement

Senior leaders were asked to identify the strengths and weaknesses of current staff officers within their commands, and then to identify the characteristics of the best staff officers they have ever worked with. Across all Combatant Commands senior leaders resoundingly applauded the professionalism, integrity, dedication to duty, and depth of work ethic of the current groups of staff officers. Senior leaders also report these officers have brought with them an exceptional amount

of leadership and command experience, as well as broad knowledge of the parent services, willingness to work in teams, and dedication to mission. As one senior leader stated (which was echoed by others across all the commands), the joint staff officers have a “strong desire to be part of something important - they want to contribute to something meaningful; and they believe in what they are doing.”

When asked to list overall weaknesses of staff officers, senior leaders identified several areas for improvement. Leadership says it is often difficult to distance staff officers from their solutions—they have to be taught to differentiate their passion for a topic from their emotions about the feedback. In addition, the O-6s are spending inordinate amounts of time editing staffing packages because products moving through the chain of command are poorly packaged. In many cases, according to senior leaders, staff officers do not review their work, and do not pay attention to details; they spend a lot of their time preparing correspondence for senior officers, yet do not know how senior officers communicate with each other. Staff officers often cut and paste information on a slide, will not review it or do background research before presenting, then cannot back up their own comments and recommendations. Overwriting—including too much information—is another area for improvement; staff officers need to learn to present their products more cogently, with clear and concise writing.

Leadership says that currently some O-4s and O-5s appear to not understand the basics/fundamentals of staff work, and that even O-6s who have not had prior joint assignments are having difficulties. The number one priority for staff officers, according to leadership, is to have a solid understanding of what being a staff officer entails and to know how to perform the basic staff skills required of them. As indicated earlier, staff officers agree with senior leader assessment, and say that the complexity, level, and intensity of the job they face upon arrival is a shock; they feel that lack of understanding of what is expected of them coupled with the amount of new information they must learn and immediately apply are significant reasons for the longer learning curves. As one leader explained, “They [staff officers] loved the tactical work, but now they have to be ‘super admins’ and they are totally out of their comfort zones.” Although senior leaders respect and value their staff officers’ commitment and energy, they were able to identify a number of areas for improvement to raise performance levels. Senior leaders say that staff officers need to:

- ***Develop a Better Understanding of the Role and Work Requirements of a Joint Staff Officer.*** They need the ability to think in terms of broader objectives, without always focusing on their own specific areas. They need to be able to develop and foster strong interpersonal relationships with other COCOM counterparts. They need a solid understanding of what questions a staff officer needs to ask, and be capable of responding to taskers rapidly with an all-encompassing approach. They need to understand that their function is to identify a problem, analyze it, identify COA’s and make

recommendations suitable for a GOFO level. One of the foundational skills needed is to learn to develop a good knowledge of the staffing process and be able to construct a staffing package for submission up the chain of command with focus on the quality of the package as well as the technical content.

- ***Increase Joint Knowledge for Working at the Combatant Command Level:*** They need broad knowledge of joint procedures, processes, basic joint doctrine, an understanding of US interagency and NGOs, as well as a better understanding of phases of operational JOPES processes, EBO (effects based operations) and military planning and mission analysis from a strategic perspective. Basic knowledge of national level guidance and how it relates to their jobs is essential. Since most at this level participate in some way in building budgets and submissions for funding, knowledge of budget and POM processes is important. They need a good understanding of the different services, how things are accomplished, their perceptions and viewpoints, as well as understanding of the Joint Staff. They need solid understanding of COCOM relationships, and more in-depth knowledge of and closer work with interagency partners. For those serving in the regional commands, application of regional considerations on an issue—host nation issues, economic impacts, multinational/cultural assessment, as well as AOR experience and cultural understanding is important. As well, they need to understand better the aspects between operational art and strategy, with the ability to align their staff work with senior leaders' guidance and perspectives.
- ***Improve Communication/Collaboration Skills:*** They need to make time for more face-to-face communication, with better and more frequent cross-talk. Improved knowledge management/ information sharing is essential during personnel turnover and for continuity of operations. Improved interpersonal communication skills—learning how to communicate more effectively and more collaboratively—are essential in a COCOM's diverse workforce. More focus on teamwork across directorates is required, and they need to get away from desks and build networks with other J-codes and other command partners. Keeping fingers on the pulse of the command helps provide horizontal integration/synchronization across the stove pipes. A willingness to share information and seek different perspectives from AOs from other divisions/directorates helps develop the best joint solutions to COCOM challenges.
- ***Develop a Better Understanding of the Ramifications of Working in a Diverse Workforce:*** They need a solid knowledge of the civilian personnel system and its impacts on accomplishing the mission. They need to understand how to create and communicate strategic and operational guidance to subordinate commands, and how to work collaboratively with interagency partners. And of critical importance is

the need to develop a sensitivity to managing/leading a diverse workforce (AD, RC, civilian employees, contractors, etc.).

- **Improve Proficiency in Basic Business Skills:** Improved writing skills; improved speaking/presentation skills; better organizational and prioritization skills; improved understanding of proper initial classification of documents; better ability to use collaboration tools and better IT system skills in lieu of more admin support to assist in filing, building briefings, etc.; improved/higher proficiencies of Microsoft Tools (Word, PowerPoint, Excel, Outlook); more emphasis on strategic thinking; willingness and ability to follow up on requirements given to them by leadership; better attention to detail—need to avoid incomplete staffing such as overlooking issues, lack of coordination with directorates/ offices with which the given staff action should be coordinated; more confidence in making decisions on their own; develop a more questioning position—do not accept first answer; ability to manage a diverse personnel base.

Each Combatant Command was provided detailed lists of the strengths and weaknesses of its respective staff officers as assessed by senior leadership; as well, they were given a list of the characteristics of excellent staff officers whom senior leaders have known. In analyzing the composite lists of joint staff officer strengths and weaknesses against the composite characteristics of the ideal staff officer, the KSAA (knowledge/skills/abilities/attributes) delta can be identified. The comparative analysis provides two critical elements for a performance improvement program: the deficiencies needing short term attention, and the long-term developmental goals

### **6.3. The Model Staff Officer**

When identifying work performance requirements, one effective method is to ask senior leaders to describe the characteristics and behaviors of the most effective people they have known and worked with in a particular job category. When the senior leaders were asked to describe the best joint staff officers with whom they have ever worked, descriptions were remarkably consistent across all nine Combatant Commands, except for some command-specific requirements (e.g., regional language and knowledge for the regional commands, logistics knowledge for USTRANSCOM, SOF and acquisition skills for USSOCOM). Because joint staff officer job descriptions are not well defined, identifying competencies that leadership and management feel are important for meeting strategic goals helps to define a job profile. Each senior leader provided specific details when answering the question, “What are the common characteristics, behaviors, and attitudes of the best staff officers with whom you have worked during your career?” The comprehensive profile is broken into eight major categories:

1. *Personal Attributes, Abilities and Attitudes*
2. *Business and Professional Skills*
3. *Service and Subject Matter Capability and Experience*
4. *Interpersonal, Collaborative, and General Communication Skills*
5. *Joint and Command Level Mindset*
6. *Leadership and Management Skills*
7. *Work Ethic/Perseverance*
8. *Lifelong Learning Skills*

From these eight categories a comprehensive description of the model staff officer can be delineated, and the resulting competencies required for high performance can be used to develop appropriate training and education.

### 6.3.1. Personal Attributes, Abilities and Attitudes of the Model Staff Officer

One of the reasons it is important to identify the attributes and attitudes which make people successful in certain jobs is to understand that skills and knowledge alone are not always enough; how the skills and knowledge are applied may be more critical to success than the proficiency of skills and degree of subject knowledge. For the joint staff officer, senior leaders provided a very comprehensive list of personal attributes and attitudes they have seen in model staff officers. This is the category for which leadership resoundingly gives current and past staff officers the highest marks and compliments. The following (Figure 30) is a list of those attributes, abilities, and attitudes senior leaders described as characteristic of highly effective and proficient joint staff officers:

<p><b>Maintains objectivity and sees the big picture</b></p> <p><b>Adaptable to any situation</b>  --open minded  -- --Flexible/ Resilient/ Very adaptable to change</p> <p><b>Dynamic, outgoing personality</b>  --great sense of humor, uses it effectively; uses it to diffuse sticky situations  --not so serious with self  --infectious positive attitude  --ability to get along with everyone  --knows when and how to have fun without compromising character</p> <p><b>Professionally hungry;</b></p>	<p><b>High level of integrity</b>  --ethical/truthful/ reliable/ trustworthy—demonstrates when working with others  --has character  --loyal/ dependable  --morally sound  --Exhibits honor, moral courage</p> <p><b>Intelligent, bright, articulate, intellectually agile</b></p> <p><b>Conscientious/detailed/patient</b></p> <p><b>Candid/ Forthright</b></p> <p><b>Shows maturity and perspective leading to empathy of the other side</b></p> <p><b>Possesses and uses</b></p>	<p><b>Even tempered/ Level headed</b>  -- not easily angered or flustered;  calm under pressure;  --separates passion from emotion</p> <p><b>Selfless, modest; checks ego at the door--“doesn't care who gets the credit” attitude</b></p> <p><b>Sincere; thoughtful; polite; treats people with respect ; caring</b></p> <p><b>Maintains balance in life</b>  --work, mission, family, friends  --spiritual-physical-emotional-social tie downs to weather storms</p>
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<i>career-minded</i>	<i>common sense</i>	<i>Outstanding physical and mental stamina/ energetic</i>
<i>Self assured/self-confident</i>		

**Figure 30: Personal Attributes, Abilities and Attitudes of the Model Staff Officer**

From a training and education perspective, some attributes and attitudes may be difficult or impossible to teach (common sense, e.g.), but it is important to list them in order to provide a full picture of the elements of success as judged by leadership in the Combatant Commands. Most of these can be taught, fostered, encouraged and rewarded. The military already counts many of these as characteristics they develop and reward throughout a career.

### **6.3.2. Work Competencies for Successful Joint Staff Officers**

**The following fifteen competencies are a result of the feedback from senior leader descriptions of model staff officers.** This is not intended to be a fully comprehensive list, but provided as a baseline for which education and training solutions can be targeted. The number one priority, according to senior leaders, is that staff officers need to fully understand what the job of “joint staff officer” entails, accept the role, and perform the tasks against high expectations. Because it is such a different role from what most staff officers have served before, it is offered here as the first competency. The first step to success is to understand what is expected, then learn the skills and knowledge to perform expected tasks.

Beneath each of the competencies are listed the specific knowledge, skills, abilities and attributes study participants identified as critical to excellent staff work. The more of these competencies learned prior to reporting for duty, the shorter the learning curve once on the job.

***Competency #1: Understands the role of a joint staff officer, and performs work requirements consistently at a high level of proficiency.***

- Functions as the brains of the boss
- Functions as an information integrator
- Rarely serves as the technical content subject matter expert, but rather as the harvester of information from subject matter experts
- Knows how to develop and route products to get to the end user;
- Knows the end objective for each tasker
- Has developed a word-processor mentality—knows how to package/format/move information through the system
- Understands that he or she is the conduit for moving masses of staff paperwork to reach small audience for signature
- Able to coordinate staff actions through a bureaucratic environment
- Able to provide solid recommendations to decision makers



- Understands time, and the timing of staff work and coordination
- Gains a clear understanding of each task—not afraid to ask for clarification
- Able to successfully manage multiple tasks at one time
- Able to coordinate an answer to a task gaining consensus without GO/FO involvement
- Knows who should and should not be included in action; resists the temptation to include everyone on every e-mail
- Knows how to get answers and information
- Maintains situational awareness
- Anticipates requirements well in advance
- Able to take directions
- Able to get the job done on time, and accurate the first time
- Is proactively assertive, aggressive, and persistent in getting tasks completed, but not offensive in manner in which it is done
- Able to take on tasks outside comfortable area of expertise
- Maintains the flexibility to change course if the situation requires
- Detail-oriented; follows through to completion of task
- Understands what the command senior leaders need at a strategic level
  - Understands the need to know—who should be included in an action and who is not necessary for the tasker to be finalized
  - Ability to pick up on the boss' comment and run with it without formal tasking
  - Knows how and when to keep his boss informed
  - Knows what is important for senior leadership to know and transmits it
- Understands the commander's intent
  - Answers the requirements before it ends in the in-box
  - Understands the mission from the boss's focus
  - Dedicated to mission accomplishment, focused
  - Ability to present concise, succinct information for decisions by senior leaders
- Proactively seeks to solve issues before they become a problem
- Exhibits flexibility in approaches, is not rigid or didactic
  - ability to adjust personal experiences to other paradigms
  - manages ever-changing requirements simultaneously
  - ability to think and adapt quickly to unforeseen requirements, tasks, research outside area of expertise

***Competency #2: Understands the organization and missions of the nine Combatant Commands***

- Understands the missions of each Combatant Command and the relationships among them
  - Understands sourcing with Joint staff

- Understands state sovereignty
  - Understanding of how each “battle cell” functions and how it fits into JOPES and CAP
- Knowledgeable of each Combatant Command’s theater assessments and current events
  - Understands the impact for on-going staff tasks
  - Keeps abreast of emerging events
  - Understands the geopolitical summary for each command and the impact on a staff officer’s tasks
- Knowledgeable of authorities affecting the Combatant Commands
  - Knowledgeable of current concentration and distribution of US forces
- Understands the overview of interagency roles and responsibilities across the Combatant Commands
- Understands the overview of roles and responsibilities that multinationals and non-government organizations may play in a Combatant Command
- Has a general knowledge of geography that allows an understanding of the theaters of each Combatant Command
- Understands the role of the Public Affairs Office at a strategic level

***Competency #3: Exhibits joint and command-level mindset and knowledge and applies them to all work products and services***

- Understands the meaning of “joint” in context of a Combatant Command; looks at issues from the Joint perspective vice Service perspective; maintains a "macro" level view of operations/functions
- Able to see things from a global functional perspective vice a regional perspective
- Thinks above current unit level
- Has a general knowledge of Congressional issues with impact on staff officer work
- Understands the general process for how an initiative from the Office of Secretary of Defense works through the joint system
- Understands foreign disclosure policies and procedures, and the rules governing release of information
- Understands how to effectively work with Public Affairs Offices in the joint world
- Understands the roles of the National Guard and Reserves
- Understands and uses guiding documents:
  - National Response Plan (NRP),
  - UCP (Unified Command Plan),
  - National Strategy Plan (NSP),
- Full understanding of Joint pubs and procedures Knowledgeable of NSPS, DoD civilians, and civilian contractors
- Has a solid working knowledge of acronyms required—joint, service specific, command-specific, interagency, multinational

- Has a basic understanding of and uses joint systems and tools (e.g., JOPES, JCIDS, JTIMS, IPL)
- Understands the joint environment (the “battlespace”)
  - Understands parent command mission and capabilities
  - Has an appreciation for the world geo-political situation
  - Knowledgeable of the general relationship of DoD and its partners
  - Knowledgeable of the joint involvement in the Global War on Terrorism, Homeland Security and Homeland Defense
  - Knowledgeable of the organizations that provide the primary players and the roles and responsibilities of each
  - Understands the different roles required of the military when the military is not the lead agent
  - Understands the total force concept—the roles and responsibilities of all players
  - Understands the relationships with the Services in a joint environment
  - Understands the joint staffing workflow (roles, responsibilities, and decision points)
  - Understands the relationship among DoD, the Joint Staff and the Combatant Commands
  - Is capabilities-focused
  - What is the right level of engagement for each tasker?
  - Able to identify and locate the prime resources
  - Understands how joint directorates work together
  - High level of understanding of joint operations
  - Sensitive to the issues facing Service Components
- Understands and uses the best practices for coordination with the Joint Staff
  - Understands the workflow process
  - Uses Joint Publications knowledge effectively
  - Knows the appropriate level for staffing a package
  - Knowledgeable of formalized joint processes such as the Acquisition Process and the Integrated Priority List (IPL)
- Knowledgeable of relevant joint strategies, policies, and doctrine
- Knowledgeable of the Joint Finance Process
  - Basic understanding of budgetary processes (POM cycle considerations, fiscal and legal constraints, colors of money)
  - Understands the general financial considerations affecting staff officer work
  - Understands special funding authorities
  - Understands authorities governing monies (e.g., advisory versus binding status)
- Well grounded in planning experience and training
- If possible, has previous relevant joint experience
  - High level previous staff experience, e.g., Pentagon experience,
  - Previous command experience
  - Experience from previous tours at Combatant Commands

- Joint focused and joint minded
  - Practices an open receptiveness for the contributions of the other services
  - Has the ability to be team focused and not Service- or Reserve-selfish
  - Willingness to set aside Service loyalties and to learn and integrate other Service expertise to work joint solutions
  - Hungry to get involved in other Services' cultures
- Understands individual Combatant Command missions,
  - Has developed an understanding of the next level of core responsibilities of each; Understands the strategic requirements of the command and able to put work products in context
  - Is knowledgeable of the regional interests of each
  - Is knowledgeable of current global events affecting each
- Understands humanitarian operations; knowledgeable of disaster relief efforts and processes

***Competency #4: Is highly knowledgeable of his/her Service organization, capabilities, and business practices***

- Functions as a general subject matter expert on Service-specific capabilities and procedures
  - Knowledgeable of what parent Service brings to the table—doctrine, branch roles and responsibilities, organization, capabilities
  - High level of tactical competency
  - Has had operational exposure
  - Mission Planning
- Understanding of Irregular Warfare
- Knowledgeable of how to get to sources within parent Service for highly specialized or technical information as needed for performing Combatant Command work requirements
- Is highly competent in their career field areas
  - Seasoned officer who has completed requisite service related specialty/grade requirements.
  - Has attended, at a minimum ILE, and preferably JPME I and II

***Competency #5: Knowledgeable of authorities and legal requirements affecting the Combatant Commands***

- Knowledge of specific legal requirements affecting the command—both internally and within the theater of operations (e.g., title authorities, treaties, agreements)
- Knowledge of partners and their roles and responsibilities (e.g. Drug Enforcement Agency, Department of Justice, Department of the Treasury)
- Knowledgeable of legal associations with authorities governing command activities
- Knowledgeable of resources and limitations of each

**Competency #6: Knowledgeable of US Government Agencies (State Department, Justice, Department of Homeland Security, Department of the Treasury, etc.) and cognizant of their relationships with the Combatant Commands**

- General knowledge of each agency and its roles and missions
- Knows when and how to coordinate with non-governmental organizations (NGO's), US and international
- Has a general knowledge of US agencies' roles and responsibilities and the coordination lines
  - Understands the general interactions, interdependencies, and coordination requirements within a Combatant Command
  - Understands the cultural differences between interagency organizations and the military that create communication and cooperation barriers
  - Understands legal authorities of interagency teams
- Understands general law enforcement elements affecting command
- Understands foreign disclosure issues and rules governing classification and release of information
- Understands the roles of the National Guard vs. Reserves

**Competency #7: Able to write, read, and conduct research at an advanced level appropriate for work performance at an executive level**

Writes coherently and succinctly for executives, with an understanding of the audience and the rank structures of both military and non-military organizations

- Able to think and write from a strategic perspective
- Able to synthesize and condense large amounts of information
- Able to communicate ideas succinctly; writes concisely and cogently
- Able to provide clear, concise thoughts to include key issues, COAs (Courses of Action), and key recommendations
- Provides appropriate level of detail for a four star leader
- Able to select appropriate writing style according to product and audience
- For each task, understands for whom they are writing, for whom they are working, and exactly what they are providing (context, objective, and solutions)
- Able to ghost write effectively for senior officers
- Knows how to write a five paragraph order (when needed)
- Understands and uses appropriate formats and styles for specific products
- Uses the BLUF approach—"bottom line up front"
- Able to provide data and reasoning behind recommended courses of actions proposed

- Can take complex technical jargon and reduce it to easy to understand language
  - Able to extract information quickly
  - Able to create original content vs. cut and paste
  - Finished products require little to no edits
- Reads a variety of materials with comprehension, synthesis, and integration of information into research and writing requirements
  - Able to read, process, and condense large amounts of information
  - Able to use analysis, logic and reasoning, and problem solving skills when processing materials used to develop recommended solutions
  - Able to complete accurate strategic analysis of reports, plans, briefings, and other work products
  - Uses critical and creative reading and thinking skills
- Able to conduct research at the appropriate level for work
  - Able to find relevant information
  - Able to organize and manage data for concurrent multiple projects
  - Able to formulate courses of action and provide backup data if required
  - Able to differentiate value of sources
  - Builds strong network of subject matter experts within the command, across the other Combatant Commands, and among other joint personnel

***Competency #8: Uses well-developed strategic and higher order critical thinking skills for task assignments and problem solving***

- Able to analyze situations and apply the appropriate problem-solving skills
  - Able to provide organized, coordinated, well thought-out inputs to questions and taskings
  - Provides solutions, not problems
  - Able to think ahead to what is needed
  - Ability to prioritize by importance or criticality
  - Understands when to break convention, look at various options before making a decision, and execute in a different manner
  - Able to rapidly analyze complex issues and get to the crux of each
  - Able to frame the problem, and answer who, what, when, where, and why
  - Able to determine root causes to problems
- Applies strategic and higher order critical thinking skills to tasks
  - Able to question and not be intimidated by authority
  - Willing to get outside comfort zone, push boundaries
  - Able to provide data and reasoning behind position
  - Thinks consistently at a strategic level, understands the strategic landscape—and develops work products with a strategic perspective
  - Able to use available resources to maximum extent

- Willingness to work through obstacles
- Has an appreciation for second- and third-order effects
- Ability to think creatively, clearly
- Knows when he/she has the right information
- Willingness to challenge the status quo as needed
- Is pro-active in anticipating requirements and questions
- Has the ability to think in parallel
- Capable of new ideas and thinking outside the box
- Actively listens to all advice before making decisions, then uses fire and forget mode
- Has developed learning strategies to quickly assess and comprehend new information
- Able to analyze, synthesize, understand where own personal value set comes into play in chosen actions
- Is inquisitive

***Competency #9: Exhibits excellent time management skills***

- Is able to prioritize tasks to meet work requirements
- Is able to multitask
- Is able to archive important information for ready access
- Is detail oriented
- Uses tools and technologies to help manage work activities
- Uses time effectively

***Competency #10: Able to communicate effectively at executive levels and across a diverse workforce***

- Uses exceptional interpersonal skills to work with a variety of people as required to accomplish tasks
  - Is not service-biased
  - Able to work effectively with people, regardless of their affiliation
  - Able to communicate positively and productively
  - Is diplomatic, supportive, well-spoken, and open in communications
  - Willing to get out of chair and talk face to face rather than rely on email
  - Does not use e-mail as an avoidance tool
  - Uses focused listening skills
  - Is assertive, but not offensive
  - Is able to network across higher level staffs
  - Builds strong networks of peers and subject matter experts
  - Able to facilitate working groups and cross-directorate meetings to solicit inputs, problem solve, determine action items and get commitments/dates and follow-up
  - able to work above, below and without rank as needed to interact with command partners
- Advanced public speaking skills
- Able to speak clearly, directly, and succinctly in groups, meetings, and one-on-one discussions

- Knows how to organize and conduct a meeting
- Uses briefings effectively as primary communication venue
  - Knows who the audience is
    - Briefs to key decision makers
    - Can articulate their point(s)
  - Provides concise briefings which include: definition and framing the issue; identifies potential courses of action; recommendations
  - Able to develop briefing slides with a strategic intent
  - Thorough knowledge of related background material
  - Understands where the briefing issue plays in the bigger picture
  - Excellent Power Point skills to create complex, interactive briefings
- Knows when to up-channel information immediately, and does not sit on bad news
- Ability to quickly understand complex issues and communicate those issues to others

***Competency #11: Able to build constructive work relationships***

- Knowledgeable of interagency partners cultures and organizations
- Knowledgeable of multinational partners, their cultures, and the relationships with the Command
- Knowledgeable of government civilians, contractors, and National Guard and Reserve personnel working within the Command
- Knows how to work effectively across stove-piped directorates to share information
- Uses persuasive vs. commanding (ordering) approach
- May exhibit passion for a topic, but restrains emotion
- Builds trust through open communication
- Uses compromise and cooperation as the main approach to business
- Identifies and cultivates reliable sources of information
  - Builds strong networks and points of contacts internally and externally across the joint world
- Builds consensus through collaborative practices
  - Find strengths in people instead of weaknesses
  - Works well with others and brings out the best in people
  - Is a team player--works well with partners, allies, other Service members, interagency partners and other members of team
  - Uses interpersonal skills that allow others to feel well utilized—not used
  - Uses great communication and organizational skills
  - Able to identify who else has input, and understands it is not his or her individual problem to solve, but an organizational/team problem
  - Knows how to facilitate meetings that lead to collaboration
  - Practices a collaborative work style—is inclusive, asks instead of commands; builds partnerships; able to get people to collaborate voluntarily, not by commanding them



- Is respectful of others' work loads
- Fosters an air of cooperation among all participants
- Able to facilitate conflict resolution for personal projects and sometimes as an intermediary for others
- Shares information willingly
- Works to build consensus
- Uses effective negotiating skills to reach consensus or agreement
- Understands the need for compromise and cooperation as the main approach to business
- Is cooperative with peers and able to work across stovepipes to get accurate information in a timely manner;
- Uses active listening skills
  - Listens to subordinates and peers
  - Is empathetic—is able to understand issues from the point of view of others
- Views personnel within a command as allies and friends, not as the enemy
- Is not Service- or organization-biased: is able to work with people, regardless of their affiliation
- Builds coalitions
- Works well across directorates, interagency partners, multinational partners, contractors, Reserve and Guard members
  - understands the cultural differences
  - understands the organizational structures

***Competency #12: Able to effectively manage and lead in a diverse work environment (civilians, contractors, Guard and Reserve, own and sister Services personnel, interagency and multinational personnel)***

- Understands how to work effectively in a multi-dimensional workforce where the military is often the minority
- Understands the principles of contracts within the directorate and uses them strategically
- Knowledgeable of employee specific rules for getting people to training courses
- Understands government civilian pay scale and equivalent ranks
- Understands the hiring/firing practices for personnel
- Understands how to appropriately reward personnel
- Understands how to write effective and appropriate fitness reports for military and non-military personnel
- Understands how to appropriately task non-military personnel
- Is committed to organizational goals and people
- Is able to make command decisions
- Is collegial
  - Understanding, compassionate, caring about, and focused on subordinates

- Has genuine concern for and interest in the people that work for them
- Is not a bureaucrat
- Leads by example in terms of responsibility, timeliness, work hours, physical fitness
- Is a positive leader who knows how to give good guidance
  - Empowers junior officers and senior enlisted to make decisions
  - Develops subordinates
  - Leads without micro-managing
  - Ability to delegate
  - Trusts
  - Allows and challenges subordinates to prove themselves
- Team-focused
  - Looks for ways to resolve problems via teamwork vice placing blame for issues
  - Shares in the fulfillment of mission accomplishment
  - Not selfish and does not take credit for work that wasn't totally theirs
  - Builds teams within and outside of the organization
  - Ability to work a team member and let subordinates lead
  - Understands staffs only succeed when they coordinate and work together
- Knows when to take leadership role
- Has excellent project management skills
- Exhibits good judgment - knows when to "roll with the punches" and when to hold ground
- Makes decisions for the "right " reasons regardless of the consequences
- Puts the mission and taking care of subordinates above own personal goals
- Gives guidance that accurately reflects the needs of senior leadership and is easily understood
- Practices excellent people skills and excellent communication skills with both military and civilian personnel, regardless of rank or seniority
- Exhibits initiative/"can-do" attitude
  - Is a self-starter/self-motivated
  - Proactive
- Strong work ethic
  - Focused
  - Desire to succeed- Self motivated in terms of training and education
  - Hard worker that does not complain about hardship
  - Willing to work long hours to get the job done
  - Shows Commitment/Drive/Determination/Motivation
- Courage to take a stand and speak when things are wrong
- Diligence in completing work to a quality that he or she is proud of
- Persistent in overcoming obstacles, real or perceived

- Positive attitude even during stressful situations
- Integrity - resists "easy way out"
- "Action oriented"
  - Takes Initiative
  - Proactive vs. reactive
  - Anticipates and leans forward
- Decisive
- Enthusiastic/ Optimistic

**Competency #13: Able to maximize technology software and hardware capabilities**

- Uses computer system to manage tasks well
- Follows network security and information assurance protocols
- Advanced skills in Microsoft Office Suite
  - Able to use PowerPoint to effectively build and present four star level briefings; able to embed and create drill downs
  - Able to use Outlook effectively to manage high volume of e-mails, files, and communications related to staffing packages
  - Advanced skills in Word for constructing and revising documents in multiple formats
  - Able to use Excel spreadsheets at the level required for the job (some jobs require more detailed use such as the ability to create pivot tables)
- Utilizes collaborative work tools to speed the process
- Knowledgeable in web-site usage
  - Able to conduct research on the web
  - Able to effectively navigate the web
- Able to use the systems of 'record' throughout the specific command and the Joint world to full capabilities
- Practices good e-mail etiquette
  - Knows who to include on e-mails—has identified contact personnel in advance
  - Knows who not to include—does not copy people unnecessarily
  - Understands the power and pitfalls of e-mail
  - Knows when to use e-mail and when to pick up the phone
- Solid skills for usage of messaging system (particularly for host nation notification)
- Uses command-sponsored tasking management system effectively
- Is not afraid to try new technologies; able to use/learn other tools needed for the job (e.g., JOPES)

**Competency #14: Able to effectively participate in exercise preparation/planning<sup>6</sup>**

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<sup>6</sup> \*\*Note: (If assigned to a directorate responsible for exercises and planning, advanced and/or content specific knowledge will be needed)

- General knowledge of joint exercises
- General knowledge of military planning skills
- Basic understanding and user capability of exercise-related tools (e.g., JOPES, JAWS, JTIMS / JMESEL)
- General knowledge of Effects-Based Operations concept and methodology
- Able to write annexes for exercise planning as needed
- Intel Campaign Planning Knowledgeable

***Competency # 15: Practices lifelong learning behaviors***

- Willingness to learn from others; military, civilian, interagency and foreign militaries
- Has both quantitative and qualitative abilities--Quantitative—such as engineering, math, hard sciences; Qualitative—social sciences, humanities
- Ability to absorb lots of information; doesn't pigeon hole him/herself
- Educated
- Intelligent
- Well rounded with varied experiences
- Willingness to participate
- Avid reader/well read on current related topics, world affairs , and current events
- Willingness to teach, and an eagerness to be taught
- Cultivated intellectual curiosity
  - Intense drive to learn
  - Doesn't take the first answer as ground truth
  - Presses for a deeper understanding of operating environment
  - willingness to question
- Willingness and ability to learn and accept change
- Has the wisdom to know that learning never stops

## **Section 7: Conclusions**

Because the Combatant Commands have such a large percentage of O-4 and below billets (49.3% of the authorized staff billets) there will always be an experience and knowledge shortfall of incoming staff officers if that proportion remains, unless personnel are afforded an opportunity to offset lack of experience with newly gained knowledge and skills before arriving for duty. The current average learning curve is from 7 to 12 months, too long for the tour durations.

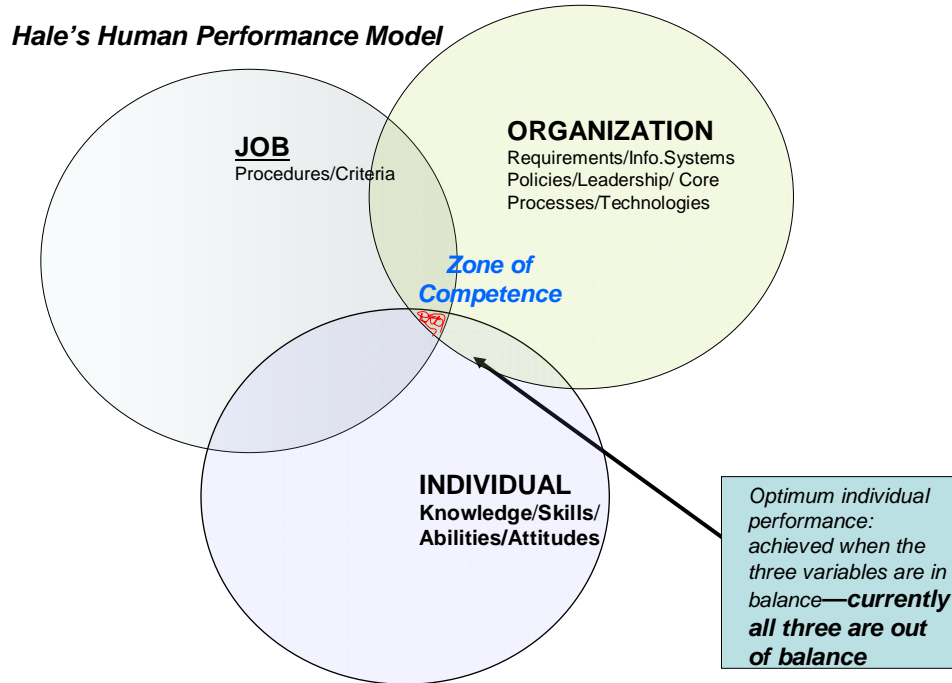
Some more command-sponsored training can provide incoming staff officers with working knowledge of the command's mission, roles, and responsibilities so that staff officers can put their work in context, but it cannot provide them readily with the joint knowledge and higher levels of skills needed for writing, speaking, and interacting with a diverse workforce. Although time on the job will provide experience, it comes at a cost to productivity when learning curves are too lengthy. Coming from tactical environments, most incoming staff officers claimed to have known very little about work requirements in a Combatant Command and almost nothing about thinking and acting in a strategic context. When the majority of the workforce is in their first joint assignment, first staff assignment, and working across new military technical fields outside their own specialties, the quality of work suffers because there is too much to learn in too many areas all at the same time. Before an individual can effectively begin applying newly acquired knowledge and skills he or she has to be able to see them in context of the mission and integrate the requirements into learned behaviors and actions. Even though staff officers arrive with Service-specific tactical and operational competence, staff work requires minimal use of the operational knowledge they have gained; the soft skills become the critical skills for success—speaking, writing, collaboration, and interpersonal communication.

Using Hale's model as a referent in each of the three areas—organizational issues, job criteria, and individual skills and knowledge—all three are in misalignment across the commands.

### **7.1. Zone of Competence Model Assessment**

Because there are dynamic variables which affect all organizations—economies, politics, global events—there is no perfect balance which lasts for long. Using Hale's model to analyze the three key areas of organization issues, job requirements, and individual preparation for the work required provides insight into the factors affecting performance of both the organization as a whole and of the individuals who provide the labor and create and deliver the products and services. The Combatant Commands function in a very volatile and dynamic global environment, involved in and affecting world events on a daily basis.

Because external factors are what drive the content and pace of work stability in a constantly changing environment, stability must be created in the core processes, leadership, and individuals to meet missions. Currently, joint staff officers are not able to work at peak performance; their zones of competence are minimized because all three elements are heavily misaligned, as depicted in Figure 33.



**Figure 33: Hale's Model: Alignment of Combatant Command Elements**

### 7.1.1. Organizational Influences

Organizational elements shape individual job performance in a variety of ways. If the organization is in turbulence, work performance is affected. Clarity of mission, vision, stated strategic objectives, and visible leadership all have significant effects on how personnel feel about the value of their contributions in helping achieve organizational goals. The elements listed in the left column in Figure 34 below, according to Hale, form the characteristics of an organization's culture and work environment. Those areas discussed below the chart are the ones which indicated issues affecting staff officer performance.

<p><b><u>The Organization</u></b>  <i>Shapes performance through</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• culture and values</li> <li>• leadership and guidance</li> <li>• information systems</li> <li>• core processes</li> <li>• technologies</li> <li>• economic strength</li> <li>• reputation</li> <li>• how well-defined are organizational roles, responsibilities, relationships</li> <li>• stability of rotation of personnel</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>On the Job</u></b>  <i>Individual performance is affected by:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• how well-designed are rules, procedures, processes associated with jobs/tasks</li> <li>• how efficient &amp; appropriate is technology used in job</li> <li>• how similar &amp; reasonable are customer expectations &amp; needs</li> <li>• how mature &amp; functional are business relationships</li> <li>• how clear, accurate, and timely is work information</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Individuals</u></b>  <i>Because individuals bring different skills/ knowledge/emotional/ physical capacities/ motives to the job:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• when people's capacities and capabilities change, the balance at work is disrupted</li> <li>• when the job is dynamic and requires new knowledge and skills, individuals may be unqualified for new requirements, or may feel inadequate to perform new tasks</li> <li>• the less knowledge of content, unfamiliarity with core systems, unfamiliarity with core processes and requirements, the longer and steeper the learning curve</li> </ul>
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**Figure 34: Organizational Influences within the Combatant Commands**

**Culture and Values:** Staff officers arriving at a Combatant Command find a different culture than they normally have been accustomed to in their prior military assignments. The more “firsts” and “no’s” they have racked up behind their names—first joint assignment, first time working with interagency, first time working at a strategic level, no targeted joint, no prior joint experience—the more likely they are to become “culture shocked” by the differences in previous and current work environments. Although staff officers expect military values to be the same across the Services, working in a diverse workforce with multinational and interagency partners, with Guard and Reserve, with contractors, with foreign governments and NGOs they often must face culture and value conflicts when trying to complete work assignments.

**Leadership and Guidance:** This is an area in which both leadership and staff officers expressed a need for improvement. Senior leaders, particularly division chiefs, felt that they should be doing more individual guidance and mentoring, but have such heavy workloads (some of which is caused by having to do heavy edits on staff officer packages) they cannot find the time to mentor as they would like. Additionally, many of the O-5s and O-6s—the directorate level supervisors and senior decision makers—acknowledged this was also their first joint assignment and they were dealing with some of the same culture shock as the staff officers with the added responsibility for oversight of personnel, many of whom are not military. Staff officers want and need more direct guidance and mentoring, particularly in the first year when the learning curve is so steep, because the job is so different, and the work environment is so dynamic.

**Core Processes:** The core processes for coordinating and managing tasks within the command are one of the areas where staff officers see the biggest opportunity for improvement. Staffing processes—from assignment to closure of tasks—need to be reviewed with an eye toward streamlining and debugging.

This includes also how meetings are established, as well as who has to sign off on an action.

**Information systems (communication channels):** Staff officers reported communications to be convoluted and affected by “rice bowl” mentalities and a lack of willingness to share information across organizational boundaries. The more junior grade officers said that it was significantly difficult for them at times to try to coerce information out of active and retired O-6s, so rank is a challenge in trying to communicate and collaborate to complete tasks. Also the multiple command partners do not have the same organizational approaches to communication so staff officers must learn the best methods to use with each different organization with whom they work. One of the biggest challenges is to not let e-mails become the only way to communicate; both senior leaders and staff officers said one of the biggest elements of success is building and maintaining networks (information systems) of subject matter experts and peers.

**Technologies:** The primary issues here are that there are too many technologies to be used on a regular basis, both classified and unclassified. Each one takes some amount of knowledge and training, and most require passwords. Staff officers need ready access to the tools and need them to work with minimal down time.

**Economic Strength:** Budgets are always an issue, but the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq have required deep cuts in many areas. Commands are understaffed, and money is tight for travel.

**Organizational Roles and Responsibilities:** Many of the commands have reorganized numerous times in the last few years, to the point where reorganizing in some commands is now an *expected* event—and is even considered part of the corporate culture. Every time there is a new reorganization in a command, whether it is because of new missions or new senior leaders, significant workflow interruptions occur, processes breakdown, and networks get splintered. Multiple reorganizations create significant turbulence, and staff officers cite these as one of the biggest frustrations they face in getting their jobs done. When they spend significant time and effort in building networks of subject matter experts and information contacts, a reorganization can wipe out an entire network, often in the middle of a project; previous contacts are too busy learning new duties to continue to help, and new personnel often are not established enough to provide assistance. A number of staff officers stated they had changed jobs several times within the first year, or in some cases were not put into the job for which they were hired—making the ramp up time even longer than normal. One of the most significant requests from staff officers for their commands and directorates is to better define and communicate the roles and responsibilities of each directorate and to identify the subject matter experts throughout the organization.



**Stability of rotation of personnel:** Military organizations are used to managing rotation of personnel. However, because of the wars, rotations are occurring more often. The military currently relies heavily on Guard and Reserve personnel to serve in staff officer roles; their rotation cycles, which are shorter—in some cases six months to a year -- have an impact on the administrative and functional capabilities of the command. Churning of personnel and reduced manpower has a ripple effect; those people who report find themselves sometimes being reassigned or “horse traded” to other directorates based on need. The constant rotations also have an impact on personnel being approved for TDY and training. One of the factors raised associated with rotations was the impact of personnel arriving without the proper clearances to replace someone who has just rotated. This becomes a serious issue within commands because of the number of tasks and tools requiring specific clearance levels. When incoming personnel cannot assume the duties of the officer they are replacing the workload is parsed to the others in the department, and the departmental leader must spend a significant amount of time reorganizing work assignments to utilize the individual productively.

### 7.1.2. Job Influences

A staff officer’s performance is affected by job structure, the rules governing task completion, the usefulness of the tools, and customer expectations.

<p><b><u>The Organization</u></b>  <i>Shapes performance through</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• culture and values</li> <li>• leadership and guidance</li> <li>• information systems</li> <li>• core processes</li> <li>• technologies</li> <li>• economic strength</li> <li>• reputation</li> <li>• how well-defined are organizational roles, responsibilities, relationships</li> <li>• stability of rotation of personnel</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>On the Job</u></b>  <i>Individual performance is affected by:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• how well-designed are rules, procedures, processes associated with jobs/tasks</li> <li>• how efficient &amp; appropriate is technology used in job</li> <li>• how similar &amp; reasonable are customer expectations &amp; needs</li> <li>• how mature &amp; functional are business relationships</li> <li>• how clear, accurate, and timely is work information</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Individuals</u></b>  <i>Because individuals bring different skills/ knowledge/emotional/ physical capacities/ motives to the job:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• when people’s capacities and capabilities change, the balance at work is disrupted</li> <li>• when the job is dynamic and requires new knowledge and skills, individuals may be unqualified for new requirements, or may feel inadequate to perform new tasks</li> <li>• the less knowledge of content, unfamiliarity with core systems, unfamiliarity with core processes and requirements, the longer and steeper the learning curve</li> </ul>
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**Figure 35: Job Dynamics**

**How well-designed are rules, procedures, processes associated with jobs/tasks?** This is an area where staff officers and senior leaders say significant improvement can be made by standardizing the procedures, processes, tools, and formats for managing staffing packages. Coordination is a major portion of a staff officer’s life requiring working with people, content, and technical systems; any initiatives which can streamline the process will be welcomed. When the standard procedures that do exist, such as templates and

formats, are not enforced problems occur in trying to coordinate and manage information across an organization. Joint staff officers seem to have a good understanding of what the core processes are which are required of them, such as task management and expected outputs, but feel there are more efficient ways in how to complete tasks. Staff officers had virtually no complaints about their abilities to create the work products, but felt the tracking and coordination practices inside the commands could use some major improvements. There are multiple formats used to track and manage tasks, instead of one standardized process. Staff officers said the processes associated with tasks are difficult. One of the biggest frustrations is in getting to information needed; although there are procedures to be followed, many people do not return phone calls and hoard information rather than sharing. Those staff officers who have never served in a staff position knew very little about what the job required before arrival, so the procedures and processes are generally not part of their career experience. Staff officers also identified that the lack of inter-departmental communication makes it more difficult to get tasks through the system.

***How efficient & appropriate is technology used in job?*** Staff officers depend on technologies for creating and managing their works. Microsoft Office is the primary suite of tools, but ironically the majority of officers have never had any formal training in the individual software packages, are self taught, and therefore are probably not using the software to its best capabilities. Staff officers feel that senior leaders do not take advantage of technology enough for collaboration. Depending on the command and the individual job staff officers may be required to use many tools; for each one there is a time investment involved in learning. Staff officers say that most of their technology training is through learning by doing, rather hands-on training, which they feel would reduce their learning curves.

***How similar and reasonable are customer expectations and needs?*** There is a big gap in what senior leaders want as to quality of staff actions and what they say they get. Senior leaders want more focus on the quality of the staffing packages while staff officers are required to put more focus on the quantity because of the volume of work and deadlines associated with each task. Staff officers resort to cut and paste as often as possible to try to meet deadlines; even though they know they need to focus more on quality, they feel getting tasks out the door is a higher priority than making them “pretty” or original. Additionally, the entire focus of a Combatant Command is strategic, but the majority of staff officers have neither training nor experience in strategic thinking and preparing briefings and other work products with a strategic mindset.

***How mature and functional are business relationships?*** One of the major differences staff officers identified in working in a Combatant Command and in Service assignments is that they have to develop a different set of interpersonal communication skills, because so much of the command interaction is based on

personality and organizational affiliation. They have had to learn how to build collaborative relationships and coalitions rather than using or responding to rank. Senior leaders listed development of interpersonal skills for building consensus second only to understanding the roles and responsibilities of the job. Staff officers have to rely on others for information, so developing solid business relationships across multiple organizations is critical to success. Staff officers did say that the Joint Directorates in general are too stove-piped and do not collaborate as well as they should or could. Those personnel who work from remote locations said it was difficult to find the right contacts at the right time within the command, and that the reorganizations make it even tougher. From the data of both the discussion groups and the survey feedback, it appears that staff officers can easily fall into “the lone worker syndrome” finding it too difficult to build the networks staff officers rely on to get their work accomplished.

***How clear, accurate, and timely is work information?*** This area is intertwined with the maturity and functionality of business relationships, the tools, and the individual’s research and writing skills. If people are not willing to share information readily, which appears to be a common hindrance to task completion, staff officers must be resourceful in finding the content they need. Rarely do they get the chance to be proactive as the volume and pace keeps them in a reactive mode on most issues. Staff officers say that clarity of tasking is a significant problem—not understanding the objectives of an assignment and not being the subject matter expert of a topic were two of the most often mentioned concerns. They were frustrated in not clearly understanding what was expected of them; most of them realize they have had little to no experience thinking or writing strategically and do not know where to get the training. Staff officers feel like there is no real prioritization system since everything is tagged with high priority. From the senior leaders perspective there are too many errors—writing, spelling, grammar, factual—in the work products. For the division chiefs, many of them say they spend more time editing than thinking strategically. Another aspect of this area relates to training—how timely and relevant is it? If it is not provided at the right time in the job it is useless, and if it is out of date or not relevant to the work process it becomes a time robber instead of a performance enhancer.

### **7.1.3. Alignment of the Individuals**

The individuals—in this case joint staff officers—are the key to a successful organization. Finding the right people and keeping them relevant to the tasks they are required to perform requires training, mentoring, guidance, and long-term development approaches. The Combatant Commands know that generally the officers they receive have been vetted by their Services, have known skills and abilities, and exhibit professional behaviors on the job. Because commands have staff officers ranging over six levels from O-1 to O-6, there is a broad range of capabilities and experience--or lack thereof—for managing the workload. In

relation to Hale’s model this is the most profound misalignment of all three elements.

<p><b>The Organization</b>  <i>Shapes performance through</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• culture and values</li> <li>• leadership and guidance</li> <li>• information systems</li> <li>• core processes</li> <li>• technologies</li> <li>• economic strength</li> <li>• reputation</li> <li>• how well-defined are organizational roles, responsibilities, relationships</li> <li>• stability of rotation of personnel</li> </ul>	<p><b>On the Job</b>  <i>Individual performance is affected by:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• how well-designed are rules, procedures, processes associated with jobs/tasks</li> <li>• how efficient &amp; appropriate is technology used in job</li> <li>• how similar &amp; reasonable are customer expectations &amp; needs</li> <li>• how mature &amp; functional are business relationships</li> <li>• how clear, accurate, and timely is work information</li> </ul>	<p><b>Individuals</b>  <i>Because individuals bring different skills/ knowledge/emotional/ physical capacities/ motives to the job:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• when people’s capacities and capabilities change, the balance at work is disrupted</li> <li>• when the job is dynamic and requires new knowledge and skills, individuals may be unqualified for new requirements, or may feel inadequate to perform new tasks</li> <li>• the less knowledge of content, unfamiliarity with core systems, unfamiliarity with core processes and requirements, the longer and steeper the learning curve</li> </ul>
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**Figure 36: Alignment of Individuals**

***When people’s capacities and capabilities change, the balance at work is disrupted.*** Joint staff officer jobs are dynamic and they have very little control over external factors; requirements and priority tasking change often and are based on world events that affect the customer base. Also, most of the individuals serving in staff officer positions felt unprepared for the job, not properly trained upon arrival, and expressed the feeling that they are trying to work at a level or two above their capabilities. As one staff officer explained, “the volume of work is tremendous, the need for quality is important, but survival just means getting things out on time, so the sacrifice goes to quality of product.” Assessing individual capacities and capabilities is based on the intellectual, physical, emotional, and personal aspects of the individual. This study was focused on identifying the common skills individuals need to perform well within a job. This is an area where individual supervisors and leaders must make judgments regarding an individual’s proficiency and capacity to perform a job, i.e., given the right training and the right tools can they do what is asked of them at the level of proficiency expected and within the timeframe required. Senior leaders did identify a number of areas for improvement for staff officer performance, and staff officers identified areas of knowledge they felt would better enable them to create the work products expected. Constant rotation of personnel and manpower shortages make for a continuous balancing act for supervisors and managers in assigning work to those who have the capabilities to complete them.

**When the job is dynamic and requires new knowledge and skills, individuals may be unqualified for new requirements, or may feel inadequate to perform new tasks.** Officers reporting to joint staff positions indicated they have very little background and experience for immediate application to job requirements. Staff officers have been successful in their

Service positions and have gained expertise in their specialties and experience in their careers. Staff officers repeatedly shared frustrations in the site visits and in the surveys about how much they have to learn before they feel like they can contribute; they feel guilty that they are not doing their part of the teamwork, concerned that they will not be seen as contributing soon enough, and frustrated that there are few places to turn except to themselves for the training and the mentoring they feel they need. As one staff officer reported in a group discussion, "I feel like a fraud every day; I have been here 6 months and I am still not sure if I know what is expected of me." His peers all shared they had been through the same range of emotions and that it took each of them almost a year until they felt like they were able to contribute positively to the command's mission.

***The less knowledge of content, unfamiliarity with core systems, unfamiliarity with core processes and requirements, the longer and steeper the learning curve.***

- **49.3%** of the authorized HQ billets are for grades **O-4 and below**, the least experienced, least trained and educated personnel on the staff; the probability is very high that the percentage is greater because billets may be filled with personnel one grade below the designated rank
- **68%** of survey respondents (971 officers) are in their first joint assignments (with proportionately as many O-6s and O-5s as junior officers)
- Only **22.7%** of survey respondents (302 officers) have completed JPME II
- **40%** of survey respondents report working **50 to 60** or more hours per week.
- **63%** of survey respondents report their ramp up time (learning curve) is 7 or more months.

Staff officers look to leadership to reach down and help alleviate work obstacles and hindrances to job performance. Some suggestions made by staff officers in this study can only be addressed by the command leadership. For those recommendations to the Joint Staff and OSD, (such as selecting a single tasking management system, and establishing a single standard set of staffing processes and formats) staff officers anticipate and depend upon leadership to promote and foster these initiatives at the executive level. Staff officers also need leadership to push the development of training and education to better prepare officers to serve in a joint staff officer assignment.

## **7.2 The Way Ahead**

The ultimate goal is to prepare joint officers who will report to assignments ready and able to perform work tasks with high levels of proficiency. The recommendations from joint staff officers and leadership made in this study

provide ideas and ways to implement successful performance improvement actions within the individual command organizations, as well as provide a direction for all stake holders to begin addressing the larger joint training deficit.

Each Combatant Command has been provided detailed, itemized reports of their respective staff officer and leadership input from Phases One and Two of the study. With the findings and the recommendations from staff officers the commands have the immediate opportunity to make internal improvements which can improve the proficiency of their command staffs. Data from the reports should also be used to aid in developing targeted internal training.

The Joint Staff J-7 JETD and JEDD, working in conjunction, should lead the way in taking the contributions and recommendations of this report to more specifically define the Joint Learning Continuum and develop an actionable plan for implementation in support of the Chairman's Vision.

Phase Three of the Joint Staff Officer Project, which is action- and solution-oriented should include, at a minimum, the following concurrent actions:

- Document and formally define the Joint Learning Continuum using relevant OSD Directives and Joint Staff Instructions.
- With JS J-7 as the lead and working with JFCOM JKDDC, develop a five-year action plan, with implementation steps for actionable items for achieving the Joint Learning Continuum,
- Immediately incorporate the findings of this study into the Joint Learning Continuum and the Joint Officer Development Program as part of the individual training component, aligned with the Chairman's Vision for Joint Officer Development, and the OSD Training Transformation initiatives, and other initiatives and instructions as appropriate;
- With JS J-7 JETD as the lead, develop a plan of action to provide a common joint tasking management tool, and standardized formats and procedures for managing joint staffing packages for use across and among the Joint Staff and the Combatant Commands;
- Create a task force of stakeholder representatives (Joint and Service) to review and refine the fifteen competencies identified in the study and begin to explore mid- to long-term solutions for individual training and education that will teach these competencies to potential joint staff personnel. The initial outcome should be a report with viable, actionable solutions with recommendations and timelines as appropriate; the long-term outcome should be a formal plan and curriculum (including both training and education approaches).
- JS J-7 JETD provide support to the Combatant Commands in developing their own robust organic training capabilities to develop Command-specific joint staff officer training.

- Conduct an analysis of the fifteen competencies against the Combatant Commands Joint Mission Essential Task Lists.

As parallel short-term efforts which could provide some immediate support:

- JS J7 JETD should lead the inventory and assessment of current, existing Combatant Command- sponsored training (courses, modules, briefings, reports, etc.) which are viable as primary sources for teaching/ training any of the fifteen core competencies and which can be shared immediately across the commands;
- Working together JS-J7 JEDD and JS J7 JETD should create an inventory of existing courses or modules within the existing JPME programs which could possibly address any of the competencies and which are shareable across the commands;
- JS J7 JETD, working with the JFCOM JKDDC team, conduct a cross check and assessment of existing JKDDC courseware which could address any of the competency components;
- JFCOM JKDDC lead the development of a Joint Staff Officer 101 course to teach the core skills and knowledge needed as identified by senior leaders and staff officers to work in a combatant command.

The current individual training deficit for Combatant Command staff officers will continue to grow as the need for more joint staff officers rises, the pool for available staff officers decreases, the ratio of O-4s and below remains high, and the reliance of Guard and Reserve personnel serving in the staff positions remains heavy. It is imperative to take action to offset the skill deficits of inexperienced and untrained personnel. To improve staff officer performance, the joint competency learning curve must be significantly reduced through on-demand targeted training and education at various points in the Service/Joint duty and through a variety of methods—classroom, self-study, experiential lessons, and technology delivery systems such as on-line programs and simulations. One joint staff officer went right to the heart of the matter and said,

“...while I do understand the intent of this survey and am not trying to be difficult...having previously served in another COCOM, I have seen the results of the past research and noted no resulting improvement. Without any improvement, required events such as these are obstacles to my job.”

The Combatant Commands have taken considerable efforts to support Phases One and Two of this project—over 5,000 pages of data and 4,000 hours of manpower; staff officers and senior leaders have provided detailed information on the performance needed and the lack of training available. The stakeholders—OSD, the Joint Staff, the Combatant Commands, JFCOM JKDDC, and the Services—have the challenge of taking the contributions made to this

study and turning them into timely, actionable, helpful solutions which will result in significant improved performance of joint staff officers.