There are few laboratories where leadership is more focused on and studied than in military matters. However, what many fail to realize is that the themes and lessons learned on leadership from military figures are highly adaptable to a wide variety of situations and can be very helpful to non-military leaders as well. These traits of effective leadership are the focus of *The Art of Command: Military Leadership from George Washington to Colin Powell* by Harry Laver and Jeffrey Matthews. If there is any doubt about the usability of these military leader's stories, the nine traits* identified in the book also coincide with many of the ideas on effective leadership put forth by Avolio and Heifetz.

While Avolio is careful to note that leadership encompasses a range of styles which can each be utilized when necessary, he clearly holds transformational leadership in higher regard, at least in part, for its positive effects on follower behavior. Many of the leaders present in *The Art of Command* display a range of transformational behaviors. The first of these transformational qualities is individualized consideration. For example, in the story of George Washington, whose trait is integrity, the authors note two textbook incidents of individualized consideration. First, Washington would often hold dinners for his senior staff officers in order to learn about them and their particular talents and to mentor them on the importance of doing the same with their subordinates. Second, Washington himself would often meet with junior members to discuss problems and important issues (p. 22). Then, as now, a high-ranking leader who does not show integrity in his dealings with subordinates can have devastating effects. The counseling of his officers on the importance of integrity and his display of integrity showed the concern Washington had for the well-being of his followers; a trait associated with Avolio's idea of individualized consideration.

* Integrity, determination, institutional leadership, cross-cultural leadership, charisma, vision, technological leadership, adaptive leadership, exemplary followership

General George C. Marshall also showed the traits of individualized consideration. After working himself to the edge of a nervous breakdown, he concluded that the well-being of an organization's members was of vital importance and ensured that he continuously impressed this fact upon those who worked for him, in addition to organizing retreats for leaders who needed to recharge (p. 68). Institutional level impact is also noted throughout General Marshall's story – his actions, such as formalizing the concept of enlisted basic training, founding the Officer Candidate School, and increasing the frequency of leadership training for officers to practice decision making codified important mentorship obligations towards everybody who became a part of the United States Army (p. 73).

Lieutenant General Lewis "Chesty" Puller was renowned for the connection he had to the men under his command, both American and foreign. During assignments leading foreign forces in Haiti and Nicaragua he was known for the uncommon characteristic of protecting these men as though they were fellow Marines (p. 134). His charisma stemmed from the deep ties he felt to his fellow Marines and it was noticed that such caring produced a higher level of performance from his men as well. He fanatically passed this ideology along to junior members during his time at the Basic School (for new Marine Corps officers) and he eventually became known throughout the Corps as somebody that could be called upon to take up the cause of any Marine in need (which he was often randomly called on to do) (p. 136). His charisma allowed him to bond with his men and feel, not just professional but, personal responsibility for their development and well-being.

The next transformational characteristic is intellectual stimulation. One of the ways that Avolio notes the presence of intellectual stimulation is through the creation of "imaginative visions" (p. 71). General "Hap" Arnold's identified trait in *The Art of Command* is visionary

leadership and he envisioned an independent Air Force that could perform many more types of missions besides the ground support that the early Army Air Corps was pinned to. Despite detractors and his own acknowledgment that air power alone could not win a major war, he challenged his people to figure out new ways to employ airplanes in battle. Utilizing heavy bombers, not to attack troop positions but to attack Germany's and Japan's ability to wage war by targeting their industrial capabilities was a crucial aspect of winning World War II (p. 173). Today the Air Force flies a multitude of aircraft capable of flying a wide variety of missions.

Admiral Hyman Rickover founded the Navy's Nuclear Propulsion Program and created an entire range of developmental training and education opportunities for those within it to allow his subordinates to explore the possibilities the Program could provide to the nations' defense (p. 197). He would also regularly question his subordinate's assumptions about their projects, sometimes for no other reason but to make his managers dig deep into their programs to ensure everything was truly on track or to discover previously unidentified problems (p. 203). Avolio notes the practice of having followers recheck solved problems as a trait of intellectual stimulation (p. 71).

Yet another transformation leadership behavior is inspirational leadership. Ulysses S. Grant's determination provided an example of Avolio's idea of inspirational leadership – his optimism even in the face of adversity, such as after a disastrous first day in the Battle of Shiloh, was contagious among his troops as they rallied to win the battle the next day. Dwight D. Eisenhower's cross-cultural leadership also provided an example – he was able to draw together a coalition of many nationalities by providing Avolio's idea of "meaning and challenge" (p. 71). He knew that "a cohesive allied team would be the cornerstone of victory" (p. 116) in Europe

during World War II and by challenging those allies to set aside their egos and national desires for the coalition, he was able to keep them together in order to attain that victory.

Finally, the last of Avolio's transformational attributes is idealized influence. As noted before, Grant's identified trait is determination which Avolio notes as a characteristic of idealized influence. Although he later succeeded, his early military career was awash with mediocrity to point where he exited the military for a time before rejoining during the Civil War. He made mistakes that were paid for in blood and also worked for generals who blamed him for other problems which he had little to do with. He also had to deal with the infighting of many who doubted his abilities to lead the Union Army. Despite these setbacks he persevered and his troops noticed. He also showed a willingness to take risks, another Avolio idealized influence trait, such as with his bold strategy to take the heavily defended town of Vicksburg. Washington's dedication to the cause of patriotism during the Revolutionary War set an example for others to follow as did his conduct on the battlefield, often exposing himself to enemy fire in order to lead his troops. Many more of the leaders identified empowered their followers through delegation and rallied their followers around a cause or a shared mission. As one can see, Avolio's concepts of transformational leadership are heavily intertwined with the traits discussed in *The Art of Command*.

Heifetz's philosophy is one of adaptive leadership. The leaders in *The Art of Command* display many of the characteristics associated with adaptive leadership as well. The clearest connection between *The Art of Command* and Heifetz comes in the story of Lieutenant General Hal Moore's story, whose identified trait is adaptive leadership. Moore pioneered the use of helicopter borne assaults during the Vietnam War; this in and of itself was a response to the adaptive challenge of fighting an unconventional war that did not have a definitive front. One of

Heifetz's traits of adaptive leadership is naming the elephants in the room (p. 101). General Moore's biggest problem was that the initial wave of soldiers inserted on the battlefield was likely to be outnumbered. By recognizing this fact and preparing his soldiers for it, he was able to implement new tactics to ensure these early waves were not overrun. Two more of Heifetz's adaptive leadership qualities that General Moore excelled in are developing leadership capacity and allowing members to use independent judgement (p. 101). To do this, he utilized the practice of mission orders – generalized objectives given to his officers allowing them to figure out the "how." This practice "decentralized …authority to his subordinates…and encouraged his junior officers to adjust to the unexpected by making independent decisions" (p. 215). This also gave General Moore the flexibility to oversee the larger operation without getting unnecessarily bogged down in each company's details. The last of Heifetz's adaptive leadership qualities that General Moore displayed is a commitment to reflection (p. 101). He thoroughly debriefed training events with his officers to find better courses of action and he often reflected on his own leadership. Even in the middle of battle he would try to take time to ask himself "what am I doing that I should not be doing and what am I not doing that I should be doing to influence the situation in my favor" (p. 220)? This practice was also trained on by his subordinates.

But while titled as such, Lieutenant General Moore's story is not the only example of the leaders in *The Art of Command* displaying the traits of adaptive leadership. General Colin Powell is another great example of this concept. He was able to anticipate the impending cliff of the Soviet Union's fall and Congress' downsizing of the military which would likely follow. The adaptive challenge of keeping a robust military in the face what was likely to be a drastic budget cut was a formidable one which would require a rethinking of how the military branches accomplished their missions. The adaptive leadership trait of shared organizational

responsibility was used here – General Powell rallied the Pentagon's disparate factions together with the Bush administration to come up with a plan first, "to seize the initiative… to control our own destiny.... rather than having military reorganization schemes shoved down our throat" (p. 251). By doing this, he was able to keep the military's ability to confront major challenges while still accomplishing the required drawdown. Another of the adaptive leadership traits he displayed was ensuring the elephants in the room are named. This came into play during planning for the first Gulf War; General Powell wanted to ensure that he was not leading the military into another Vietnam. He pressed the Bush administration to decide if it was willing to go to war to liberate Kuwait (p. 252) and consistently pushed General Norman Schwarzkopf on revealing the ugly during the invasion planning (p. 255) so that the administration went into it with eyes wide open.

As an Air Force officer, I receive a lot of professional military education on leadership but well-explained examples can be hard to come by and the sometimes-hazy application of generalized concepts can be difficult to grasp. Establishing the connection between the leadership traits in *The Art of Command* and the ideas of Avolio and Heifetz has been helpful to me in this respect. By breaking the complex task of leadership into individual qualities, *The Art of Command* helped to illustrate the picture better. One example that I identified with was the theme of accountability; throughout each of the mini biographies, each of the leaders shows a high degree of standing by their decisions. Even if the decision came about as the result of group discussion, each leader ensured that those above and below him knew that he was the ultimate decision maker and that the consequences would fall on him. While I have been fortunate enough to avoid the struggle of war directly, and thus not tested in such a capacity, the willingness to be accountable is far reaching and this is an area that I feel strongly about.

Getting young military members to act in this way has been a big challenge throughout my career; it is a topic that I touch on constantly but many young officers struggle with. To confront this issue, I try to model the idea at every opportunity and I also try to ensure young officers know that it is okay to make a mistake – with relative exception, a mistake might get one in trouble but it will pass and the person will hopefully learn from the experience.

Another theme that I identified with was the idea of decentralization of leadership, which is, effectively delegating responsibility down to the lowest levels possible. Many of the leaders in *The Art of Command* allowed their subordinates to lead their respective areas without undue interference. This is a central tenet of effective military operations however it is also one that, in my experience, is not often practiced. Leaders often want their followers to display pride of ownership for their position however that can be a tough task if the leader does not let the follower feel as if they own their area. Leaders such as Lieutenant General Moore cultivated leadership by giving even the lowest ranking person an area to be responsible for, to own. Leaders like Admiral Rickover gave their subordinates an uncommon amount of decision making authority, in his case, by all but obliterating the hierarchical structure of his organization. They would supply a vision and would let their followers implement it; the leader would monitor, supply subtle course corrections, or step in if things were heading down the absolute wrong path, but they always gave their subordinates the chance to lead. This is a concept that has chafed me during my time in the military; I have had many leaders who micromanage their people and the effects can be disastrous when it comes to cultivating new leaders. Without the freedom to learn how to lead, followers become dependent on the leader and decision making abilities are not adequately honed. By the time the follower is put into a formal leadership

position, he/she might find that they have never actually led before (similar to an encounter with an Air Force colonel that Heifetz notes in his text).

The final area that struck me was how many of these leaders fostered internal debate with their peers and/or followers. George Washington had to consult with a war council when he first took over the Continental Army and would let it overrule him at times (p. 20). General Eisenhower had many heated discussions on how to employ the Allied forces during World War II, especially with British Field Marshall Bernard Montgomery, General George Patton, and French leader Charles De Gaulle. General Marshall had to contend with a burgeoning Air Force leadership that wanted its independence from the Army; he even agreed that it needed to happen but disagreed that it should happen during the middle of World War II. Admiral Rickover would ignite debate on decisions he agreed with as well, just to ensure that the arguments underlying certain courses of action were on firm intellectual ground (p. 197). Such examples are numerous. I have enjoyed working for leaders who allow this and I try to allow this as well although it can be difficult as many people are afraid of breaking their deference to my position. But the ability to afford dissent and not confuse it with disrespect is vital to figuring out the right way to proceed on exceptionally complex issues which involve many stakeholders. Many of the successes each subject enjoyed are due to this trait; each won their respective battles or wars or, in the case of Admiral Rickover, revolutionized the Navy forever.

Avolio asks his readers to spare five minutes a day to think about a leadership question they encounter as an exercise in reflection that is meant to help grow one's leadership philosophy. Laver and Matthews also state that "learning by doing must always be reinforced with learning by thinking" (p. 2). Thinking about the nine traits discussed in *The Art of Command* and their definitive connection to the ideas presented by Avolio and Heifetz has

proven their application beyond the military leader and has helped me to identify avenues I can utilize to improve my leadership potential. Whether using charisma and vision to inspire, modeling integrity, determination, and followership, or intellectually stimulating adaptive change, I look forward to employing these ideas in my professional setting and spreading the word to others to help carry the Air Force forward.